American miniaturist

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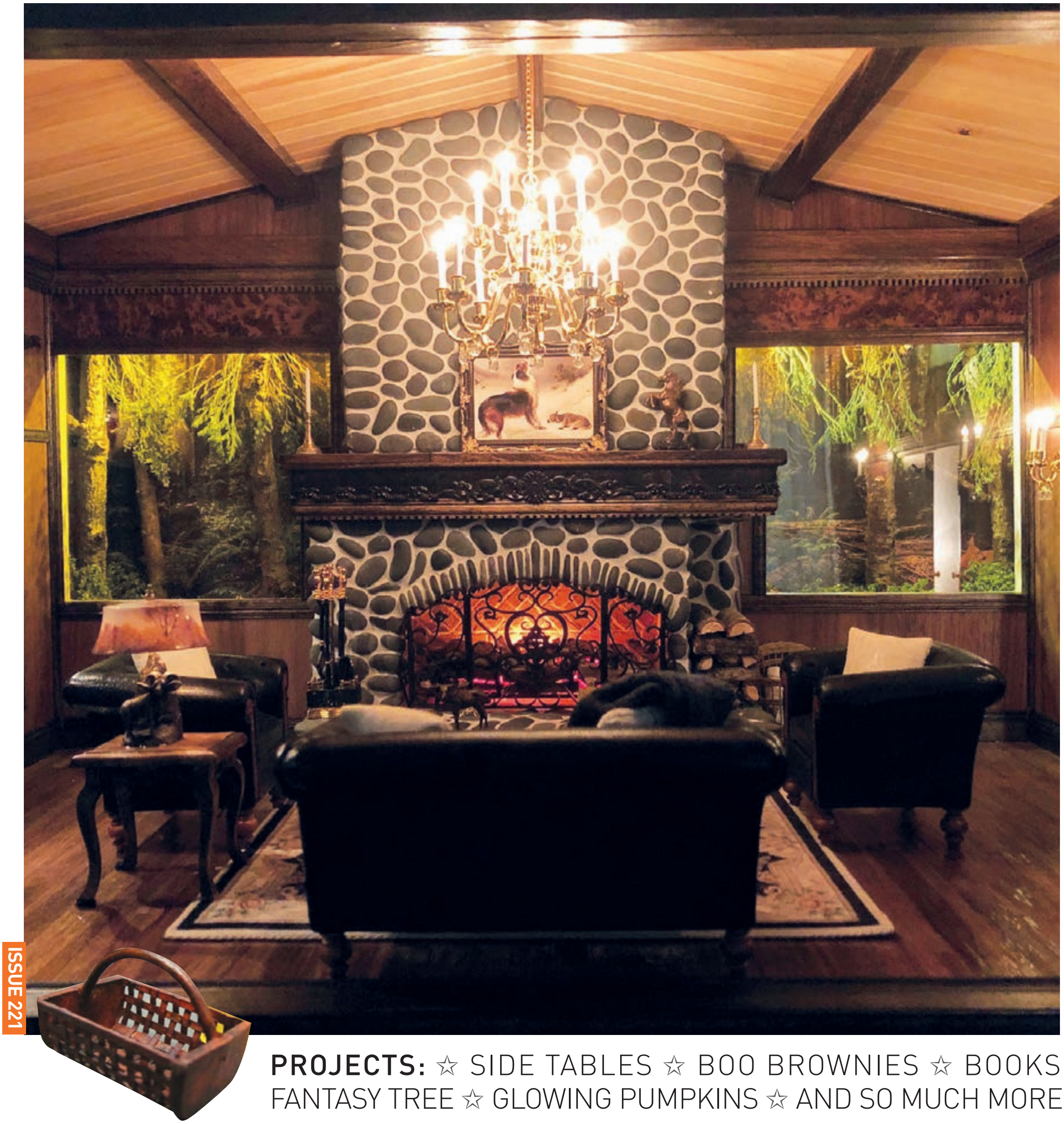

ISSUE 221

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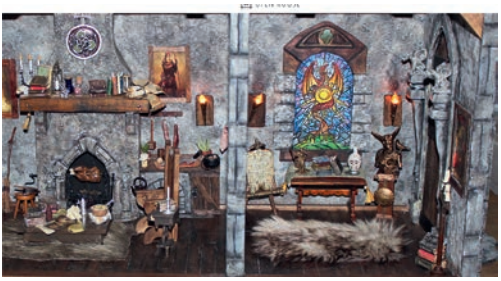

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WELCOME

Recently I caught myself channeling my energy into intangible things. It's always good to have dreams, but there are also many opportunities right in front of us that we may miss them if we're looking too far out. So I refocused on things I could achieve in the near future. One of them was to start strength training. I am 52 and as I get older it will be easier to twist something or pick something up in a wrong way and hurt myself. I found an amazing gym and now have a trainer! Yes, I am feeling the burn and it's such hard work, but I feel so good at the same time.

Exercise is a great way to keep anxieties at bay. Art is also wonderful for focus and stress relief. The other thing I have been working on is pushing my doll art to another level by trying different techniques and purchasing new mediums and materials. It is so important not to get in a rut with your art. I know it can feel uncomfortable to push your creativity and skill but it is so worth it.

Some of us create to unwind so any sort of stress can be uncomfortable while you're in your zone. But the reward from seeing your work progress feels even better than staying in that safe place. So if there is a day when you feel a little more brave, jump on that opportunity and try something new. Don't expect it to be perfect, just look at it like you are making a prototype and note the things that work and those that needs adjustments. Then share it with *American Miniaturist*!

Auralea Krieger, Editor
auralea@ashdown.co.uk

PROJECT

A moonlit All Hallows' Eve

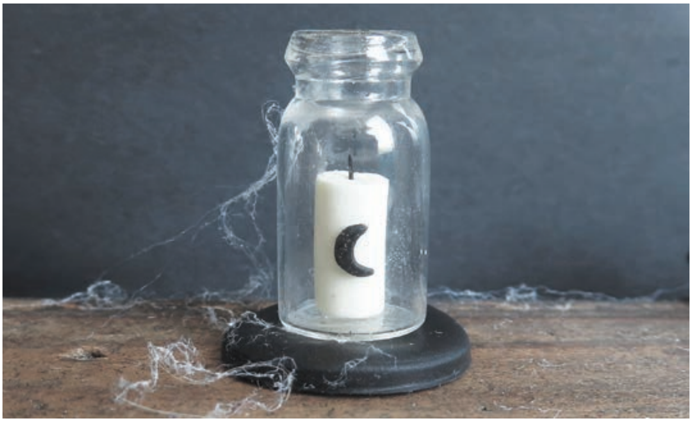
This moon candle will add some mystery to your Halloween home

BY SADIE BROWN

MEET THE MAKER:

Sadie Brown

"Passionate about bringing the world of small scale to as wide an audience as possible, I created my first miniature from clay more than 25 years ago. Living on the Isle of Skye in Scotland, home provides a constant source of creativity and inspiration!"



Scale = 1:12

Materials:

- Polymer clay - black, white, yellow
- Needle tool or sewing pin
- 2cm round shape cutter
- Bamboo skewer
- Small paintbrush
- Cutting knife
- Fine black permanent marker pen
- White glue
- 1:12 scale glass jar
- Old 1:12 bamboo basket

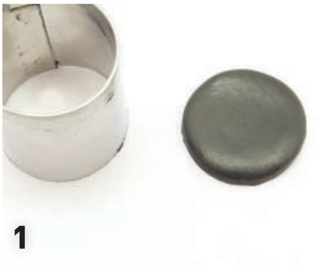
Create the magic and mystery of Halloween with this miniature candle.

1 Roll out some black polymer clay to just under 2mm in thickness and cut out a circle using a 2cm round shape cutter.

2 To make the candle, mix a little yellow clay with white to make cream. Roll into a tube of a suitable diameter to fit through the top of your chosen 1:12 scale jar and place in the freezer for a few minutes to allow the clay to harden up a little. Remove and cut a short length for the candle, using a needle tool or sewing pin to make a small hole in the top for the wick.

3 Roll a small tube of black clay, pointed at each end around a bamboo skewer or the stem of a small paintbrush before flattening with a fingernail to create a crescent moon shape. Bake alongside the candle and the circle of black clay. Allow everything to cool thoroughly.

4 Cut a small length from an old 1:12 scale bamboo basket for the wick, coloring with a fine black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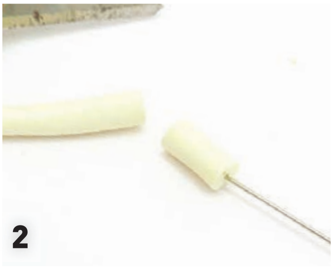
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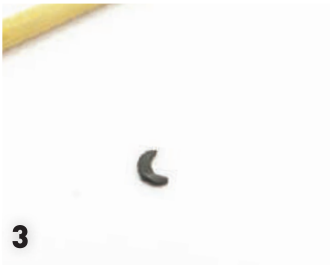
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permanent marker pen.

5 Glue the wick into the small hole on top of the candle and stick the moon to the front. Add a dot of glue to the bottom of the inside of a 1:12 scale jar and place the candle inside.

6 Once the candle is firmly inside the jar, glue the jar to the black circular base to complete the look.

Enjoy your little candle!

dollhouse miniatures

FINE MINIATURE ART FOR THE DEVOTED COLLECTOR

Don't miss the tutorials, tips, and techniques by top makers in the latest issue of *Dollhouse Miniatures*. Connie Suave continues to share her *On the Road Again* vehicle series with great aging tips. Kim McCool begins her ongoing tutorial to make a complete 1:12 scale doll from polymer clay. And Ron Seibert turns a printable rug from *DHM's* Cut-Outs into a realistic rug for your mini scene!

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MINI MAIL

AM is your magazine, and we want to hear from you. Write to: MiniMail, American Miniaturist, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944. Or email: auralea@ashdown.co.uk. Letters may be edited if necessary.

★ Star letter

I had to write and tell you how charmed I was by the cover of issue *AM*219 and the article about Bee Felten-Leidel. I absolutely fell in love with the adorable mice in all their little settings. Two years ago, I made a log cabin I call, "Miss Mouse's House" because there are three mice living in it. There are stacks of cheese in the kitchen and loft. My mice are ceramic, but Ms. Felten-Leidel's are so soft and cuddly that I may have to buy a felted mouse to live with Miss Mouse. This was my favorite article of the magazine!

Susan from Broomall, PA

Winner

I was so taken by the feature of June Sprigg Tooley and her clever way of enhancing furniture with decoupage. You often see beautiful painted furniture by artists and think "I wish I could do that." With this technique you can! Thanks for this wonderful feature. Thank you so much.

Gail from Westford, MA

New subscriber

I subscribed to *AM*, sight unseen, upon the recommendations of some members of the mini club I had newly joined. I wasn't even sure I remembered the right magazine name; I did remember the price was a bit scary. My first issue arrived – *AM*218. It came boxed, the magazine wrapped in tissue with a mini gift tucked inside. All unexpected. I thought: "Yes, this looks worth it!"

I was left with many impressions. Seeing the very first project, I was concerned that I might need very specialized supplies

Be our Star letter winner next issue

You could win this 1:12 scale fruit boat from Karen's Dollhouse Shop just by sending in a letter with whatever is on your mind about miniatures or an issue of *AM!*

Karen's Dollhouse Shop
Web: www.ReutterPorcelainUSA.com
Web: www.KarensDollhouse.com

(silicone molds) before I could try to make anything at all. Not so. Continuing on, I saw projects using a wide range of materials, from the simplest, paper and mat board, to hand-cuttable wood, to those utilizing specialized products for water scenery and lighting.

The range of project topics was also wide: foods, decorative items, furniture, a shop accessory, a house. My biggest and probably most important impression – that I can see myself actually able to do the projects. The numbered step-by-step directions coupled with corresponding numbered photos assure understanding and confidence. I am planning to start with the highly realistic "Vintage Kitchen Stool" made of mat board. Making a scene with a water feature is now equally feasible for the same reasons.

It is pleasant to sometimes see the work of artisans. In the context of this type of magazine, it is especially appreciated when a tip or method is shared, as in the article on Erika Pitera and the article on the 1930s farmhouse by Auralea Krieger who discussed making her tin ceiling, crackle paint tips, a tin roof, stones, and creating touches of real life story in the scenes. Lastly, there is the Snippits page. Nice touch and a much appreciated little bonus. Thanks for all of it! I am pleased.

Lynn from Salinas, CA

We would love to hear from you!

Let's turn this MiniMail page into an *AM* forum. Here are some suggestions from our recent survey on what readers would love to read about from all you innovative miniaturists out there.

★ Share a finished project.

★ Tell us about new tools or products you have discovered. It could really help another maker!

★ Are you searching for something specific in miniature form? Ask for help!

★ Do you need help learning about a miniature piece you have? Send in a photo and we can ask in MiniMail.

★ Do you want to start a mini group in your area?

Three side tables

Choose the table style that works for you

BY SHERRILL NECESSARY

MEET THE MAKER:

Sherrill Necessary

"I have retired to Eugene, Oregon with my husband. I have always been crafty, but practical, spending many years refurbishing my real life houses. In the 1970s, I furnished a dollhouse with my daughters, and in 2012 I started refurbishing it for my granddaughters. That was the rebirth of my interest in making minis. The world of miniatures lets me continue to apply all the skills I've picked up, including creativity and problem solving. I also joined the Eugene Miniatures Club where like-minded individuals share skills and techniques."

I came across a café table that looks sophisticated in a contemporary setting. In my attempt to miniaturize it, I came up with two additional styles: rustic and casual.

The method is simple, it uses wooden disks that can be purchased or cut, or some of each. A diameter of 1-1/4'' gave the right proportion for a table of about 1-1/2'' to 1-3/4'' high. Craft shops carry precut 1/16''thick disks in packages with the two sizes I used. You can also cut 1/16'' thick pieces on a Cricut Maker. Decide which table you want to make before purchasing supplies.

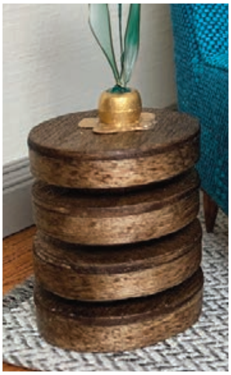
Scale = 1:12

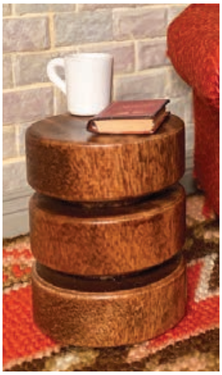
Materials:

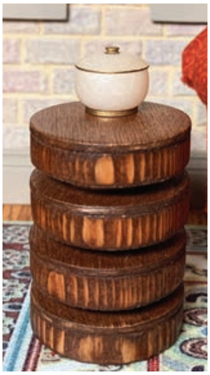
- Pre-cut wood pieces from a hobby supply:
  - 1/16" thick wooden discs
  - 3/4" x 1/8" wooden discs
  - 1-1/4" wooden wheels
- Cut your own pieces:
  - 1-1/4" dowel
  - 1/4" dowel
  - 1/16" basswood sheet
- Light colored wood veneer (like Cricut)
- Miter saw
- Scroll saw, knife or Cricut
- Sandpaper
- Stain
- Wood glue
- Clamps

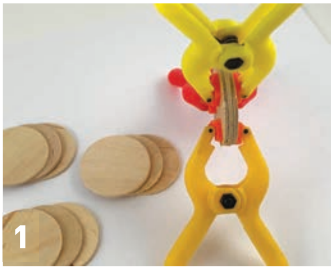
Contemporary table

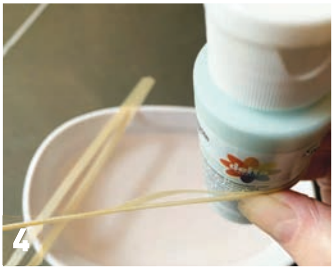
This is the most refined of the tables. It calls for pre-cut disks, purchased disks and veneer. You will need:

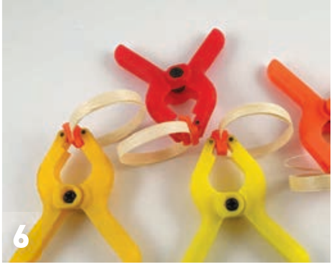


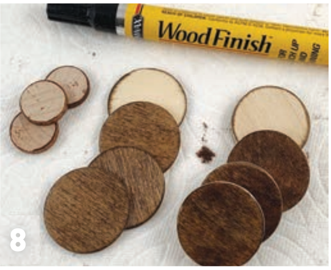












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Wood Finish

- 16, 1/16'' thick disks, 1-1/4'' diameter
- 3, 1/8'' thick disks, 3/4'' diameter
- 1 sheet of wood veneer

1 Separate out the four best of the larger wood disks to use as tops, and set them aside. Layer the rest in four stacks of three. Glue the stacks together and clamp to get a tight bond.

2 Cut a strip of light colored wood veneer to 3/16'' wide by 12'' long.

3 Cut the wood veneer strip in half, put the pieces in a dish of water and microwave for 2 min.

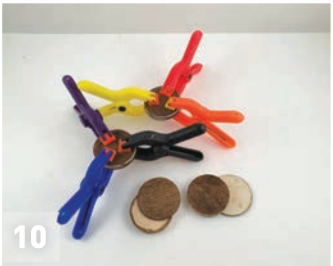
4 While wet, slowly bend one strip at a time around a paint bottle until you see it separate into two wood layers and a binder layer. Slowly continue bending until you reach the end.

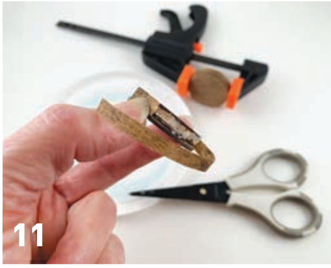
5 Pull apart the pieces and discard the binder layer. Then do the same with the other strip.

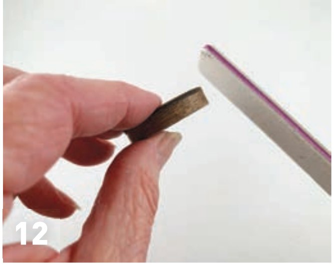
6 Wrap the strips into loops one at a time and clamp them until dry for several hours or overnight.

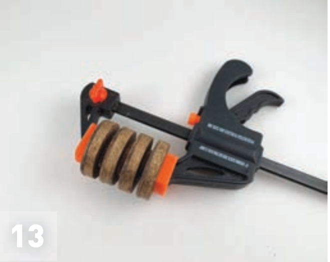
7 Sand the disk stacks to remove some of the unevenness while maintaining the disk shape. Lightly sand the other large and small disks.

8 Stain the edges of all the pieces, as well as one side of each of the larger disks (tops) and disk stacks.









9 Carefully stain the veneer strips. Allow all the stained pieces to dry (overnight for oil-based stain or stain pen).

10 Glue the unstained surface of each top to each unstained surface of the stacks. Extend beyond the edges of the stacks just a bit. Clamp.

11 Carefully glue the veneer strips around each stack, pushing it up against the top disk. Cut the end so it butts up to the beginning. Smooth the veneer to the entire circumference of the stack and clamp until set.

12 Sand the top edge in places where it overlaps too much.

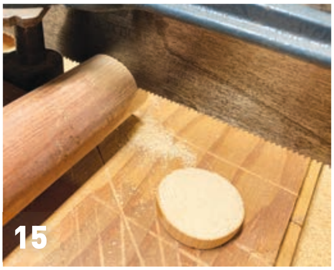
13 Touch up the stain if needed, then stack the disks alternating large (with the 'top' facing up), and small. Clamp until set.

14 Apply the satin finish of your choice. Smooth with steel wool and apply another coat of satin finish. Enjoy your table!

Rustic table

This table was the first one I made and uses supplies I had on hand. I let the brittle old wood dictate the style. You will need:

- 1-1/4" diameter dowel (new or old)
- 4, 1-1/4" diameter, 1/16" thick wood disks
- 6, 3/4" diameter, 1/16" thick wood disks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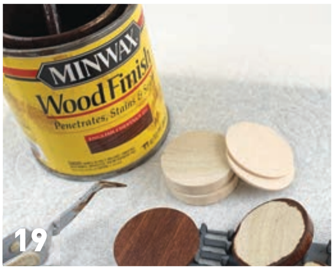
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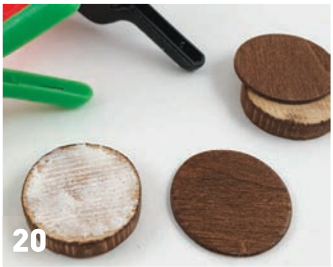
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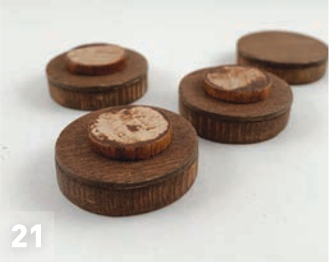
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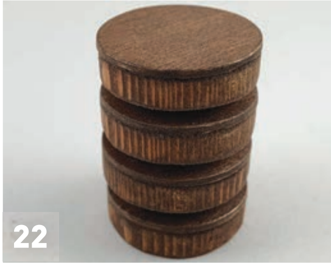
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15 With a full size miter saw (or similar), cut four 3/16'' 'slices' of the 1-1/4'' dowel (ours was an old closet rod).

16 Sand the rough surfaces a bit.

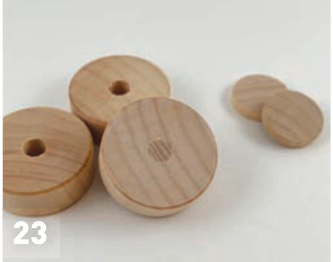
17 Layer the small disks in three stacks of two.

18 Glue the pairs together and clamp to get a tight bond. Lightly sand all the pieces.

19 Stain the edges of all the disks and one side of each of the larger disks. Allow to dry (overnight for oil-based stain/stain pen).

20 Glue the unstained surface of each top to each unstained surface of the dowel slices. Clamp to make it join tightly.

21 Glue a 3/4'' disk stack to the top of three of the large pieces. Stack them and glue them.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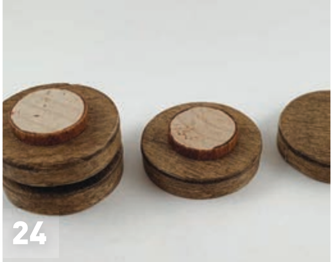
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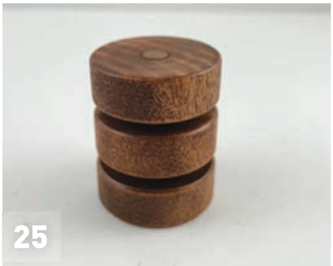
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Then top with the remaining stack.

22 Sand lightly and apply your favorite clear finish, you're done.

Casual table

I searched online for precut versions of the preferred shapes and found some 'wheels' that were 1-1/4" in diameter. Although they were thicker than our inspiration table, I was attracted to them because there was no cutting and little gluing. When combined with the 3/4" x 1/8" disks we are using as spacers in the contemporary table, this was the easiest interpretation. I used three wheels for a table 1-1/2" high.

23 Set out three wheels, two spacer disks, and a piece of the 1/4" dowel 3/8" long. On one of the wheels, glue the small dowel into the axel hole even with the top. Sand all the pieces lightly if needed and then stain.

24 Glue a small disk on the two wheels with holes. Stack and glue them and then glue the plugged wheel on top.

25 Paint with your favorite clear finish.

You can experiment with disks of different thicknesses and diameters, and use your choice of assembly techniques. Have fun and share your finished product with *AM*!

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Kennedy Miniature Construction

Let's get to know Karen Butler-Kennedy, of Kennedy Miniature Construction

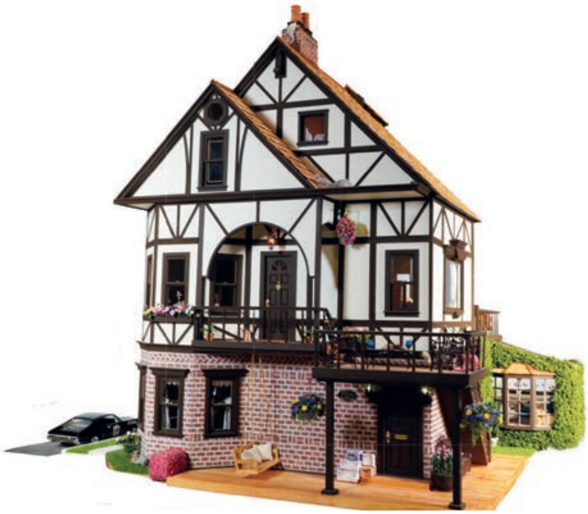
We talked with her about her background, work, and inspiration.

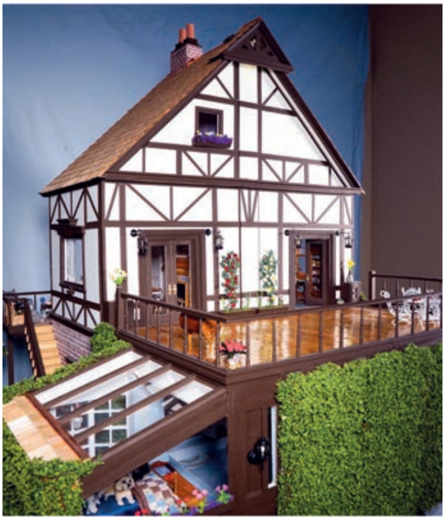
Hi Karen, how did you first discover miniatures? I grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area where my father was a Manufacturers Representative for as many as thirty-two different collector toy lines. They included; Steiff, Aux Nations, Corgi, Furga, Madame Alexander, B.B. Bear, Merrithought, Lenci Dolls, Fantastic Merchandise, and MiniWright, to name a few. We were always surrounded by people in the business, and I grew up knowing a lot of very interesting people and was exposed to the finest in the toy industry. Joachim Steiff came to our house and stayed for a visit. We took him for his first trip to the ocean, where he went swimming despite the cold Fall weather. Pit Ginsburg, of Fantastic Merchandise, was a friend and a guest at my wedding. I still treasure the cut glass bowl he gave me that day and the memories it is attached to.

When I was a child, my father set aside two MiniWright dollhouse kits for me and thanks to Pit, a lot of Fantastic Merchandise pieces as well. Because the companies that my father represented were collector toys, I had a select few pieces from his business that I was permitted to play with as a child. The miniatures were always my favorite, whether they were furnishings for doll's houses, dollhouse kits, or cars. I always was fascinated with tiny things. I would crochet thread to make tiny clothes, but never for dolls. The clothes were for my tiniest animal toys. To this day, there are no dolls in my miniature builds. I love to add animals to them instead.

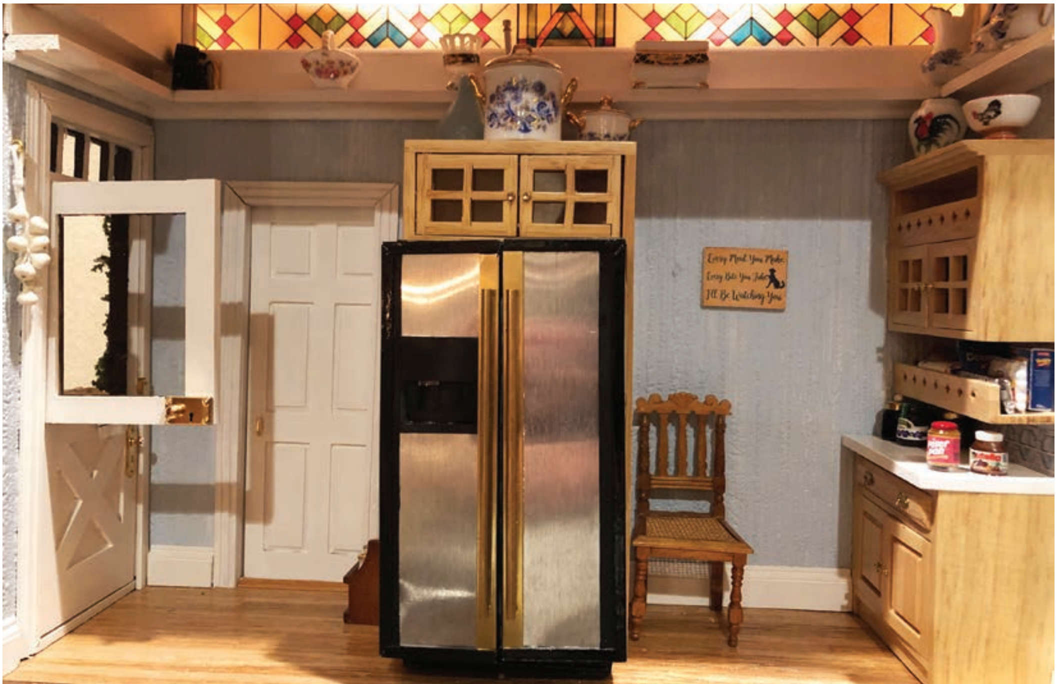
How long have you been making minis and how did they become your business? I was

VEGETABLES





always making little things to play with as a child, from whatever materials I could find. I remember making tiny furniture from twisted paper when I about six years old. My first build, *The Kennedy House*, started as a kit. It was missing many parts and had to be scratch built to a large degree. I customized most features and designed the exterior as well as the interior. I also added an entire back half to the house with a side street. I had shared my project with my friends and co-workers, who were so impressed with it that they were trying to encourage me to start a side business. I didn't take the idea seriously at that time and just continued to build the house that was destined to become



my prototype build. It took a little over three years to complete. When 2020 came in like a horrible nightmare, I lost my job of fourteen years and quickly pivoted to starting my own business…still not thinking about making miniatures my livelihood.

I've worked in finance since I was sixteen so logically it was a remote accounting business. I had lined up four new clients and then by late March all four had cancelled due to the pandemic. It was time to pivot once again, this time to the miniature business my friends had encouraged me to start. I worked throughout the Summer of 2020, completing an entire back half of *The Kennedy House* to showcase what I can do with a bathroom, main bedroom, and some interestingly unique features. The ceiling in the main bedroom is abalone shell, surrounded in rustic blue-washed pine planks to match the pillars in the room.

It is back lit around three sides. The bedroom window seat is deep blue stained birdseye veneer. There's miniature carpet padding under the bedroom carpet, so that the legs of the furniture sink in just enough to look true to life. The bathroom features real marble flooring, and real ceramic tile in the shower, a pocket door to the kitchen, and back lit stained glass. The back-lit stained glass carries through to the kitchen over the refrigerator, as the lighting is inside the wall between the two rooms.

The decking in the back of the house has LED lighting all the way around it, nestled into the railing so that the wires and bulbs can't be seen. I reupholstered, painted, and/or rebuilt much of what is furnishing the house. I couldn't afford a refrigerator that I could respect, so I built mine to include real stainless steel, separate plunger switches to light the LEDs for the fridge side and freezer side when the doors open, and a cord that plugs into the wall behind the unit. I had to learn to work with polystyrene and metals, as nothing I've made involves a 3D printer or laser cutting tool. When I couldn't find a toilet that I thought was realistic and attractive enough, I built mine to be a replica of my favorite type in real life - the pillbox toilet.

Why did you choose to make the pieces you do? I think of things that I would love to see in miniature and then search to see if they exist. I choose to use real materials in my projects, wherever possible, because I want the realism to go just as far as it can. I started my first completely scratch build in October of 2020 during lock-down. I thought it would be unique to see a grand, huge stone fireplace on a miniature scale. I didn't see that this was done anywhere else the way I was picturing it, so I set to work. The interior of the fireplace had to be real brick, with design work that continues all the way up inside to the mantel. It is very important to me that even with a dental mirror, a person could not see where the bricks stop. I used tiny rock that looks like river rock with real mortar. I had not seen a miniature forest outside the windows of a room-box, so that was something I tackled.

The forest continues far to the left and right of the windows, so that one can't see where it ends. The switch on the wall works, and there is a flush mount outlet in the floor for the table lamp. The ceiling is hand bullnosed pine to resemble tongue-in-groove. I call this room-box *Mountain Home Study*. It took five months to complete. What I love is to offer my clients a chance to have a custom-built miniature house designed just for them; something from their own imagination or a dollhouse version of a favorite house or room. Something to pass down through generations.

Which subject would you like to know more about? Although life took me in a completely different direction, I'm a singer and started out a music major. I love so many different types of music and can't learn enough on the subject. The dining room in *The Kennedy House* is a reflection of this passion, as it has many different musical instruments in it for entertaining miniature guests. I also have a miniature guitar in the attic bedroom, for playing by the fireplace. There is even a 1/144 scale guitar in the bedroom of the Dutch Baby House I made, and a piano in the parlor.

What does your family think of your work? My family is behind me 100%. They are my biggest fans, which makes me extremely happy. My dad, now nearly 98 years old and living with us, loves to see what I make. Last time he took a look at a piece I had completed he said, "You know, you should do this for a living!". I lost my mom in 2006. It would have been so fun to show her these things and talk with her about all of them. However, I believe she can see them from her new vantage point.

Do you have pets? In my life, my dogs have been key players in shaping who I am as a person. I've never gone too many years without a dog in my life. Our beagle, Snoopy, was with us for seventeen years. She went everywhere I went, including to work with me each day. Summer of 2020 was her last, making 2020 even sadder than it already was. Our other dog, Mileena, is ten years old, and she mourned Snoopy's loss right along with us. She's a little one-eyed Brussels Griffon/Pomeranian mix that weighs seven pounds soaking

wet. Back in 2019, I found an artist working out of Madrid, Spain, Anna Ryasnova of Artanry, and asked her if she could make miniatures of Snoopy and Mileena. They have been the only inhabitants of my prototype build ever since and are my little spokesmodels. It's a huge (albeit, miniature) comfort to know that the two of them will live forever in miniature this way. My social media followers have grown to expect miniature Snoopy and Mileena to be in most of my posts. They've become a kind of trademark.

Where do you sell? I've been building an audience through social media and also have a website: www.kennedyminiatureconstruction.com. Now, if I were as good at coding a website as I am at building miniatures, the site would look so much better.

What advice would you give to your younger self? If I could speak with my younger self, my advice would be to make time for what you love. Don't let life derail you because you can do whatever you put your mind to. Don't let anyone tell you that it isn't realistic to shoot for your dreams. It's what life is all about and if you blink you'll miss it.

Do you plan your work or do you dive right in? When it comes to creating my projects, I plan every single aspect of the work ahead of starting. I have a clear vision of the finished piece the entire time. Along the way, if something stumps me, I go to sleep thinking about it. When I wake up, I have the solution.

Are there other miniaturists that you were inspired by? I'm completely awestruck by William R. Robertson's work. One of my favorite toy collections when I was little were my Corgi cars. I grew up loving cars and as a teenager I was the only girl in my vocational school learning auto mechanics. I worked on my parents' cars (sometimes when they asked me to and other times on the sly). It was interesting to me that William R. Robertson started out working on cars as well. I love tools as much as he does so his little miniature tools are fascinating to me. I also really admire his choices of materials. Not to mention that his miniature furniture and houses are the true gold standard.

I am also a huge fan of Minifanaberia. After building my refrigerator, I can honestly say that I don't ever want to do it again! Minifanaberia appliances will be the only miniature appliances that I'll include in my miniature houses.

Anna Ryasnova, of Artanry, and Marina Pokryvalova, of AmiToysGifts, are my favorite miniature animal makers. I couldn't resist starting a small stuffed animal collection for miniature Snoopy and Mileena in *The Kennedy House*. They even have a stuffed leopard by Marina in the attic bedroom.

Also, anyone can tell by looking through my miniature house that I love Reutter Porcelain. It was such an honor to have them post about me and *The Kennedy House* on Instagram twice! There are so many more artists that I admire, I wish I could name them all.

What do you love about miniatures? Miniatures allow the maker to build anything they can imagine, small enough to treasure, admire, and pass down through generations. It's a unique art form that brings joy to so many people of all ages. Pure joy.

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Boo brownies

Try these easy-to-make miniature boo brownies

BY MO TIPTON

MEET THE MAKER:

Mo Tipton

Mo Tipton is the miniaturist behind The Mouse Market, an online shop for miniature food, molds, and tutorials. Her favorite part of sculpting is when she captures a texture just right, like perfectly moist cake crumbs or stringy pizza cheese.

These easy-to-make boo brownies add a spooky-cute touch to your dollhouse Halloween festivities!

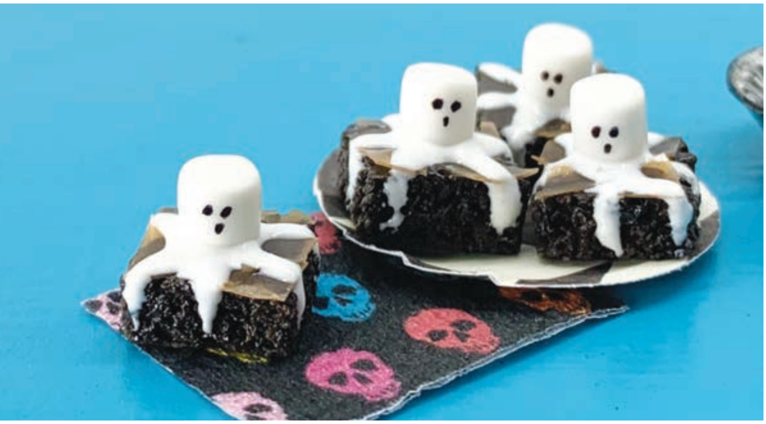
1 Start by preparing the brownie clay. Mix two parts chocolate brown clay with one part black clay to create a rich, fudgy color. Then, mix one part of this fudge-colored clay to three parts translucent clay, kneading thoroughly to combine.

2 Roll the clay into a sheet a little more than 1/8'' thick and cut out 1/4'' squares to form the brownies. If the clay is really warm and soft, you can place it in the freezer for ten minutes before proceeding to the next step.

Scale = 1:12

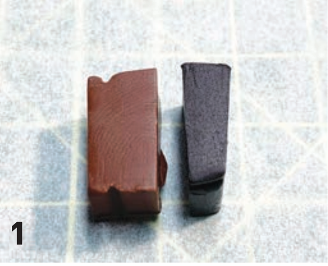
Materials:

- Polymer clay - Chocolate Brown, black, white and translucent
- Liquid polymer clay - translucent and white
- Rolling pin
- Needle tool
- Toothpicks
- Clay blade
- Ceramic tile for baking (with one side glazed, the other unglazed*)
- Ultra fine point black permanent marker
- Satin polymer clay varnish (optional)



3 Use a needle tool to tease the sides of each brownie square into a crumb texture.

4 Create a crackly brownie crust. Take chocolate brown clay and mix one part brown with two parts translucent, kneading thoroughly to combine. Roll this clay into a papery thin sheet, and bake in a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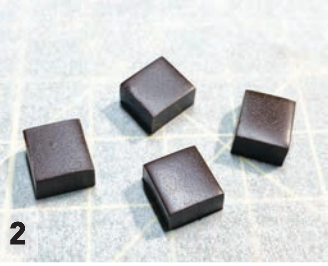
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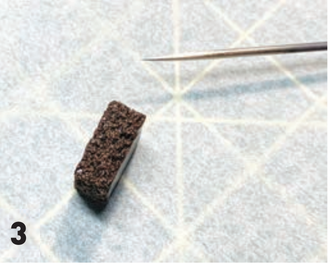
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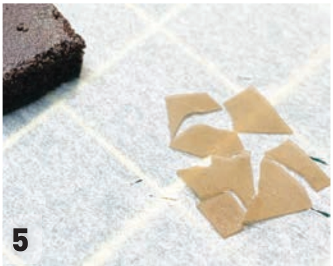
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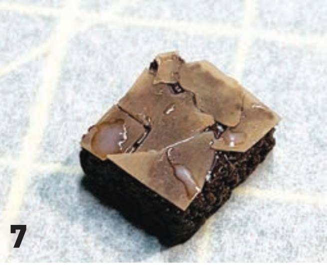
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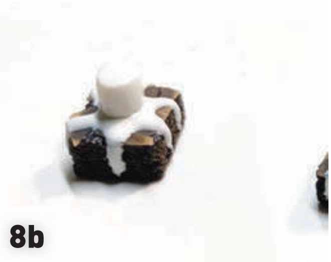
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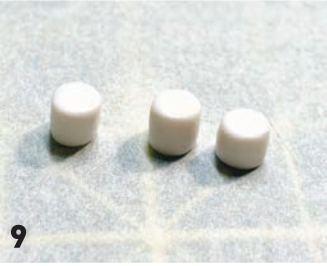
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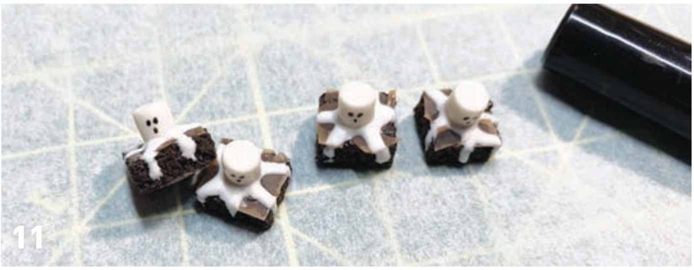
preheated oven for five minutes. Make sure you're using a ceramic baking tile (the unglazed side); placing this thin sheet right on a metal baking tray will lead to scorched clay.

5 Let the thin sheet cool, then use one of your brownie squares as a template to cut out a square piece from the thin sheet. Use a sharp blade to cut this thin square into jagged pieces. These will form the cracked crust on top of the brownie.

6 Use a toothpick to swipe a very thin layer of liquid translucent clay onto the top of your brownie square, then arrange your jagged pieces on top like a puzzle, leaving little gaps between some of the pieces.

7 To make the brownies easier to decorate, place tiny dabs of translucent liquid clay on the glazed side of your ceramic baking tile, and set each brownie on a dab. This will act like temporary adhesive, anchoring the brownies to the tile so you don't have to handle them individually when you decorate them. Bake the brownies in a preheated oven for ten minutes and let cool.

8 Now, prepare the white chocolate sauce. Chop a little chunk of white clay into little pieces and mix with roughly an equal



amount of liquid white polymer clay, mashing and stirring with a toothpick to combine, then spread this on top of each brownie, dragging some of it over the edges to create drips.

9 Make the marshmallows. Mix two parts white clay with one part translucent, kneading thoroughly to combine. Roll the clay into a snake about 1/8'' in diameter and cut off little pieces. Use your finger to gently soften the cut edges, giving it a puffier, marshmallow appearance.

10 Bake the brownies in a preheated oven for a final seven minutes and let cool.

11 Use an ultra-fine-point, black permanent marker to add the eyes to each marshmallow ghost.

12 If you like, you can add a touch of satin polymer clay varnish to the melted white chocolate portion, and perhaps a tiny dab on the sides of the brownies to make them look more fudgy, but use a light hand so the brownies don't look unnaturally wet.

TOPTIP:

You can purchase inexpensive ceramic tiles at most home improvement stores. I bought a plain white one with a glazed and an unglazed side.

13 For a fun twist, swap out orange marshmallows with a little stalk of green clay on top for Jack o' lanterns or green marshmallows with little silver clay ''bolts''on each side for Frakenstein's monster brownies. What other spooktacular variations can you come up with?

Visit https://themousemarket.com to see more of Mo's work.

Mini tutorials needed

We hope you have been enjoying all of the wonderful tutorials featured in *American Miniaturist*. There are so many impressive creative ideas and new techniques in the miniature community. We try our best to find projects we think our readers will enjoy, but we know there are more that we can find out there.

If you would like to be a part of this fun publication, please consider being one of our valued contributors.

We have great opportunities for miniaturists who submit tutorials such as credit towards subscriptions and individual issues. And, if you are in business, your tutorials might actually help promote what you are selling. We'll furnish you with these details after your submission has been approved.

Imagine how much joy your mini project could give others who share your passion for this art form!

Send your step-by-step instructions and photos to Tutorial Submission, *American Miniaturist*, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944. You may also send your entries via email to auralea@ashdown.co.uk. Please be sure to include your name, address, phone number, and email address. We can't wait to see your projects!

Bringing ghoulish creatures to life

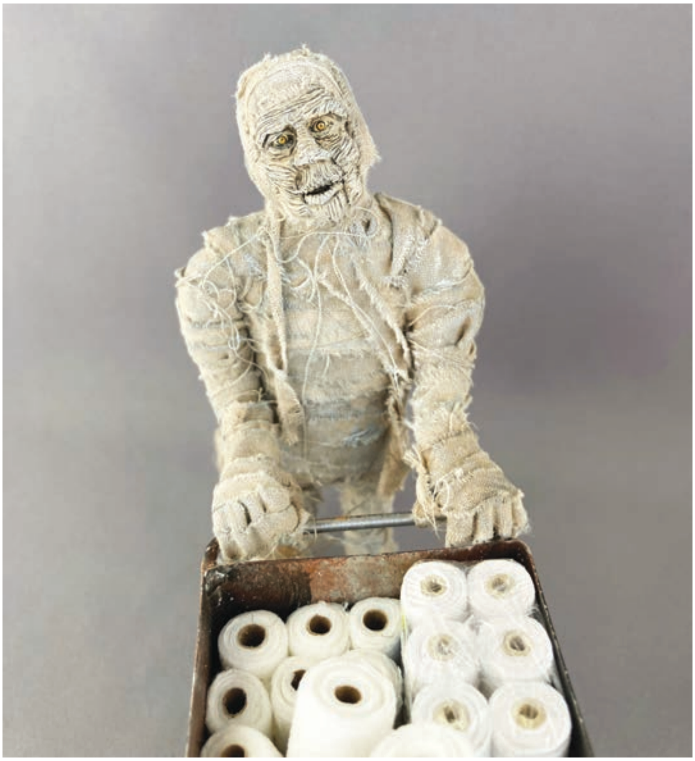
Pat Benedict enjoys every creepy minute in her studio while she makes mini magic

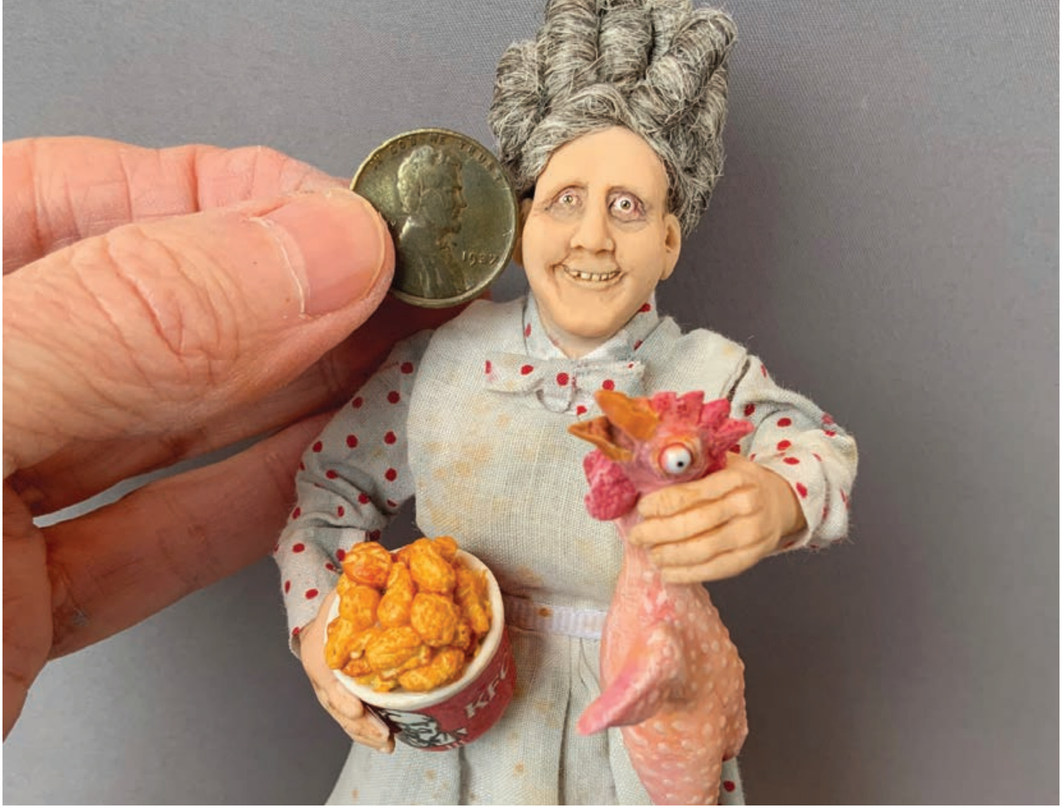
BY DEB WEISSLER

In mid September, when thoughts of Halloween appear on many of our radar screens, Pat Benedict's most requested design, "A Ghost Appearing Through a Wall" will have been snatched up by one of her many eager eBay bidders. Pat calls herself a haunted miniature artist, ironic considering this is her favorite pastime regardless of the season. All of her pieces are OOAK and when it comes to haunting Halloween miniature figures, no one does it better than Pat. How appropriate that this latest creation was born In her orange Halloween studio in the attic, a life-size Wicked Witch of the West is her constant spooky companion.

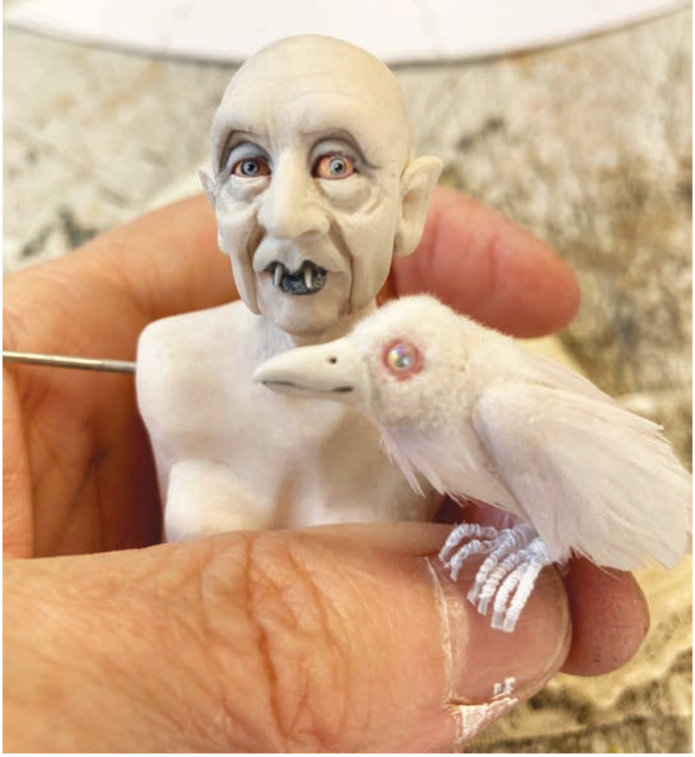
A life-long fan of Halloween herself, Pat loves decorating her own home for her favorite holiday. This year her home will be on the annual St. Joseph, MO Halloween

Below left: Miniature artist Pat Benedict. **Below:** A mini mummy with dressing for his new outfit!





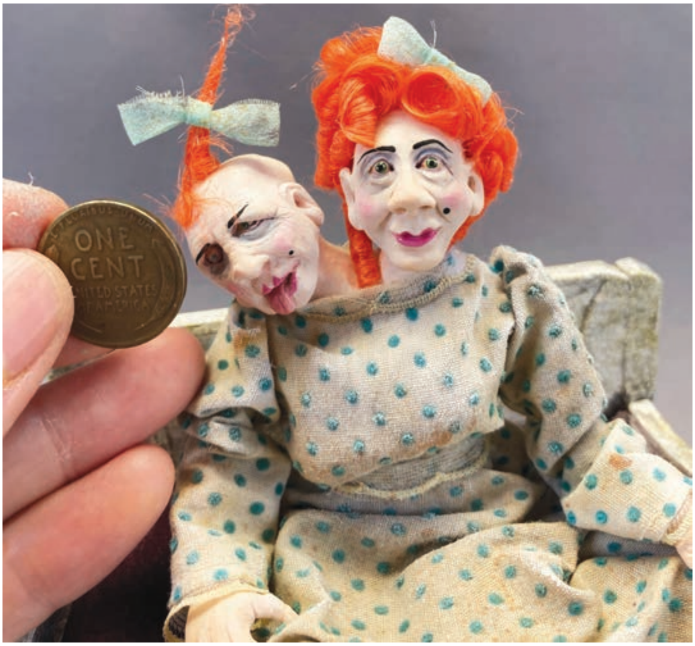
Right: A gorgeous sculpt of a vampire and their familiar.



tour, but because her elderly parents will be visiting, plus the pandemic, Pat will be confining this year's home tour to her outdoors. It will be a spooky treat for visitors.

Pat began sculpting in 1989, creating wonderful witches. "I cannot sculpt pretty", Pat laughs. "I can only sculpt ugly", so her foot tall witches seemed the perfect venue. As a former visual merchandiser of window displays for 3 major mall developers, her creativity went from big to small. She just had no idea how small!

In 2003 IGMA Fellow Patricia Paul, fellow lover of



Above: One of Pat's circus dinner guests for her new project.

the macabre, introduced her to 1:12 scale and it wasn't long before Pat was hooked. She admits it wasn't easy learning to scale down her figures. In the beginning the hands were too big, the heads were too small, and buyers noticed that details like undergarments were missing. She patiently listened to each critique, adjusting her scales and embellishing her costumes. The efforts paid off and soon Pat attracted a loyal following. When her figures debuted on eBay eighteen years ago, every one of her pieces have since found happy homes.

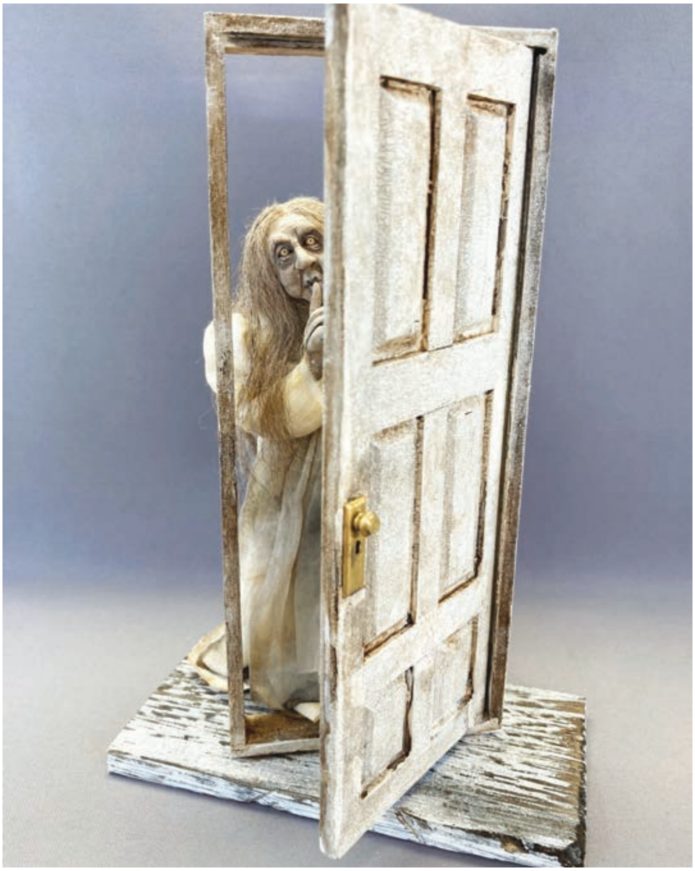
So how did Pat find her way onto the haunted trail of miniatures? She was born into a military family, traveling the world before the family eventually settled down in Colorado Springs. It was there she experienced the hair-raising goose bumps that went along with Saturday afternoons' creature features on television. She still enjoys watching classic horror and science fiction movies on Saturday night's Svengoolie with her husband of 41 years. "I'm a big chicken but love a good scare," Pat admits. "No gore; just a good old scare. Horror movies really don't inspire my art. They scare me and I have nightmares! But I love the costume designs in my favorite TV show, *What We Do in the Shadows*. The character Nadja has the best dresses and her hair styles are fabulous."

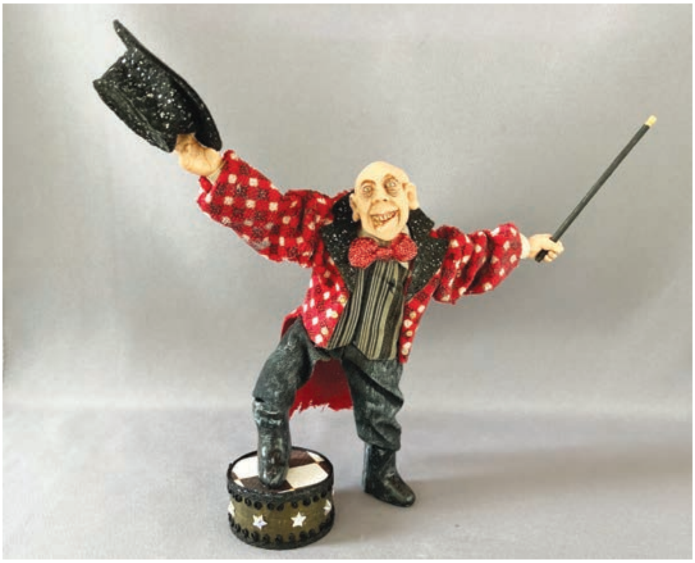
Pat is always searching for the next inspiration to drive her creativity and that burning desire to bring them all to life. "I'm always challenging myself to sculpt better, to push myself to add just a little more creep to the creepy, haunted, witchy world I create. I also have fabulous collectors who challenge me with fun commissioned pieces." Miniaturist Linda Sullivan is one such loyal customer, her spooky Spirit-Hill Miniature Witch Shopping Mall is populated with many of Pat's creations.

Pat's sculpting skills are truly revealed in her figures' faces. She can achieve a depth of realism in each and every face and eyes, drawing you in while you search for their plaintive or terrifying stories. Witches, ghosts, mummies, pirates, vampires and assorted ghoulish creatures caper across her studio table; some comical, others evoking pathos or mystery. If you're not into miniature vignettes, her hanging ornaments look brilliant on a Halloween tree.

"I do not make copyrighted characters, so at times I have difficulty coming up with new designs. After sculpting haunted miniatures for over 18 years, I'm still plugging along and enjoying every creepy minute! I do go through creative burnouts where I just have to sit back for a couple of weeks, watching scary movies and driving around the city looking at how other folks decorate their houses for Halloween."

While 2020 was crippling for so many businesses, Pat saw sales spike as miniaturists drew solace and creativity in our hobby. Her glowing feedbacks continue to feed her soul. She's currently working on a creepy circus-themed dinner theater and having the time of her life! A final message from Pat: "Hope everyone has a safe and fun Halloween! Haunted hugs!"





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The perfect mini observatory

Nancy Schmidt creates Herschel's Observatory in one-inch scale for a contest

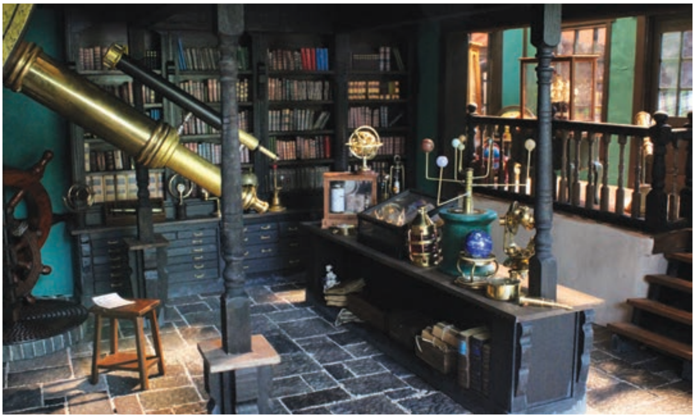
BY PAM NORTH

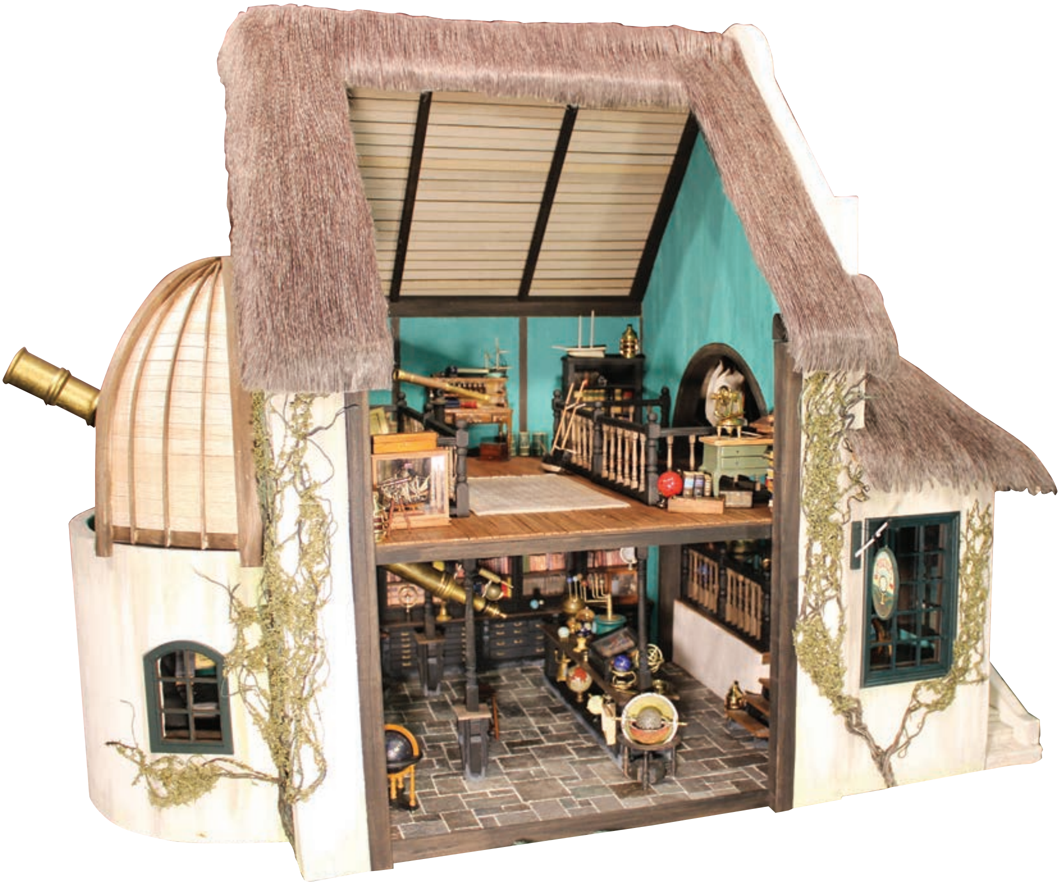
Miniatures figured briefly in Nancy Schmidt's childhood in the form of a bright blue dollhouse, but it wasn't until later in her life that she again explored the miniature side of things again. A Naval officer for 20+ years, and now Director of Port Operations for the Navy in the Pacific Northwest, Nancy had no formal training in crafting miniatures. She managed to get one crucial lesson, however, as she related, "I pestered my son's grade school art teacher to let me learn in the back of her classes, and she finally relented. She taught me all about color and how to use it. I could sculpt and create structures, but the painting always intimidated me."

> 'The entire structure was made from scratch, including the large telescope.'

Inspiration for Nancy comes from problem solving, and she enjoys participating in the Creatin' Contests held by HBS/miniatures.com, and she was its second place winner for 2020 with her Herschel's piece in 1:12 scale. "What I like about the Creatin' Contest is that we are given a single requirement and the rest is fair game," she explained. I tend to look at the contest kit as a shape. From there I try to pick a theme on something that interests me (navigation

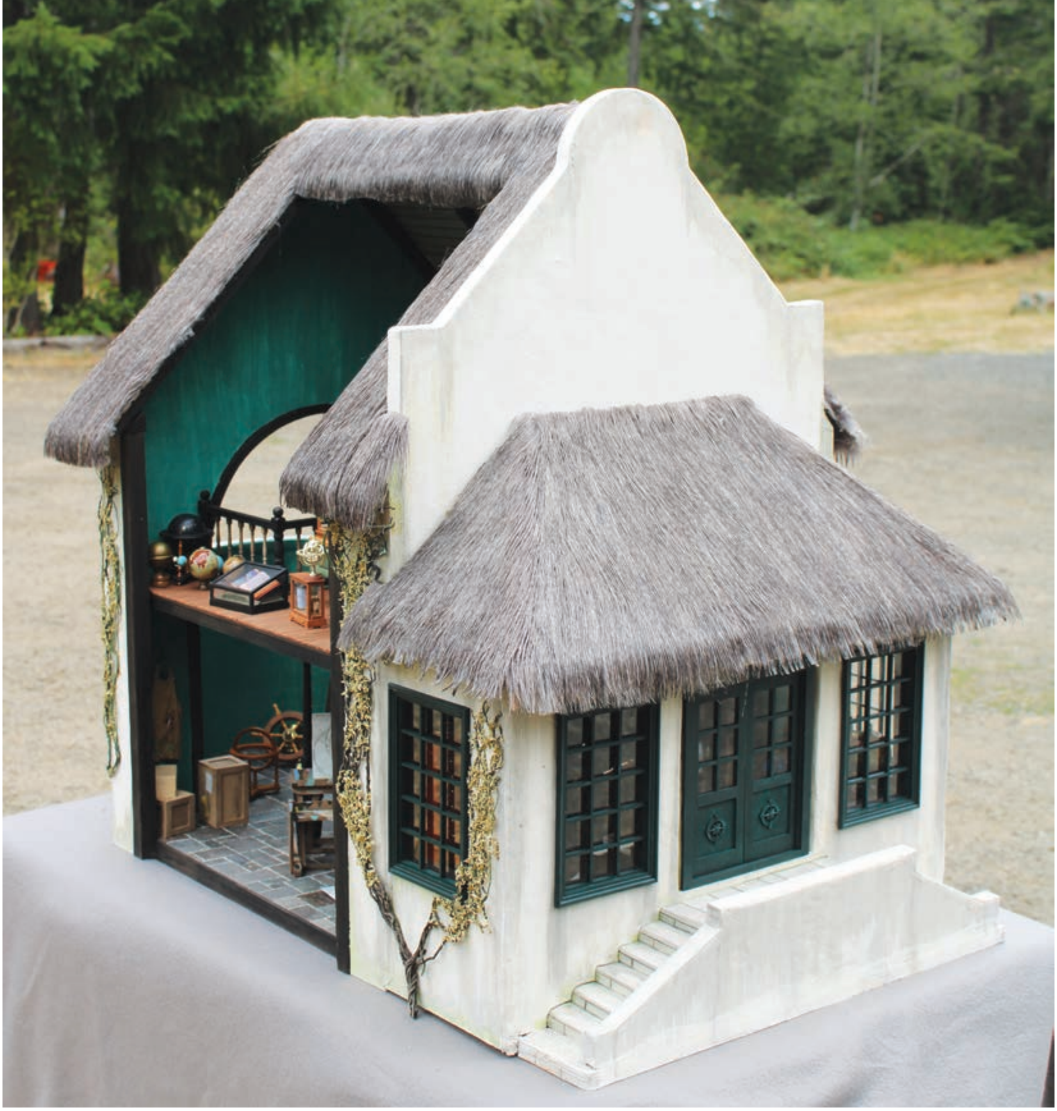
Below left: Miniature artist Nancy Schmidt. **Below:** A look inside the first floor where the telescope is placed.





Above: An overview from the back of the observatory. **Right:** The roof is thatched beautifully.

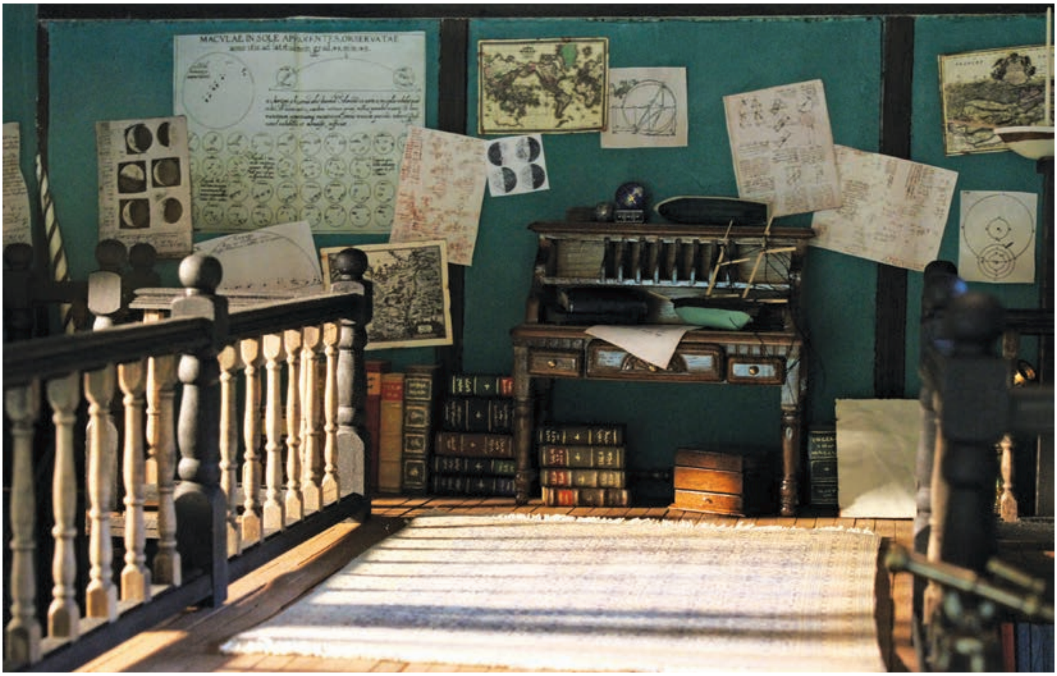
in the case of Herschel's) to keep me focused on what items I should start collecting. As I collect, the size and shape of the building to house those items takes form, and I simply have to fit the shape of the kit into the shape of the building/structure. "I love old navigation equipment and when I saw the navigation shop in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movie '*Dead Men Tell No Tales*'



I knew I could make something similar."

Materials used were: foam core board, egg carton, balsa, paperclay, Gorilla Glue, craft fur, sand, yarn, and parsley. "The entire structure was made from scratch, including the large telescope. I made the telescope first to get a sense of how big the building needed to be. The telescope was built based on the size of the wooden thread spools I used for the front optics, so the inspiration for the entire structure revolves around an old wooden thread spool. Once I settle on a theme, I will look for miniature items on Etsy that fit the theme. I will purchase quite a few items from artisans as I cannot make them as well as the artisan, nor do I have the time. Purchasing from artisans keeps our hobby alive!"

The thatched roof is craft fur laid down onto a roof structure (not yet on the dollhouse), and then soaked in watered down PVA glue. "I apply the glue with a paint brush, making downward strokes, and really saturate the fur. The structure is propped up on the high side and the glue will drain away from the fur (makes a huge mess!).



Above: As a Naval officer for over 20 years, the navigation theme suits Nancy's background.

Comb the fur with a hair comb to make the appearance of thicker thatch, and let dry overnight. Trim to suit. Also, the floor grouting was done with an eyedropper, and the vines were made with yarn and parsley off the structure, and then glued in place once they were dry."

One difficult aspect was the original roof for the dome end, which was to be copper. "I could not figure out a way to make the copper even and uniform with the curved dome. I made the inside planking and decided it looked effective as it was so I left it alone."

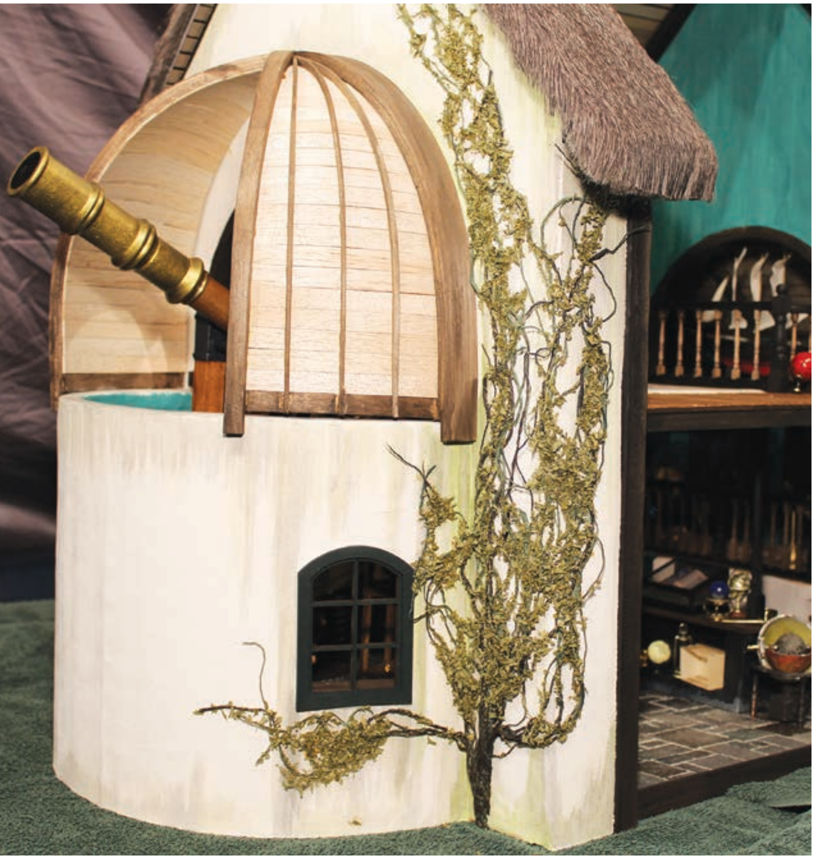
> 'Her favorite part about the piece is the teal walls.'

Her favorite part about the piece is the teal walls. "My family was not on board with this color, but I think it makes the piece absolutely fabulous!" She also loved making miniature display cases for the miniature items. "I created molds/forms for each one so I can replicate any of them. The

Right: Herschel's flagship sits proudly on the beam.

angled book display was the most difficult to make."

The structure turned out exactly as she envisioned (accept for the copper roof), but she ran out of time for the décor inside. "I had made quite a few paper maps and charts to display on the walls, but the rapidly approaching contest deadline made that impossible. In the pictures now, I have included the

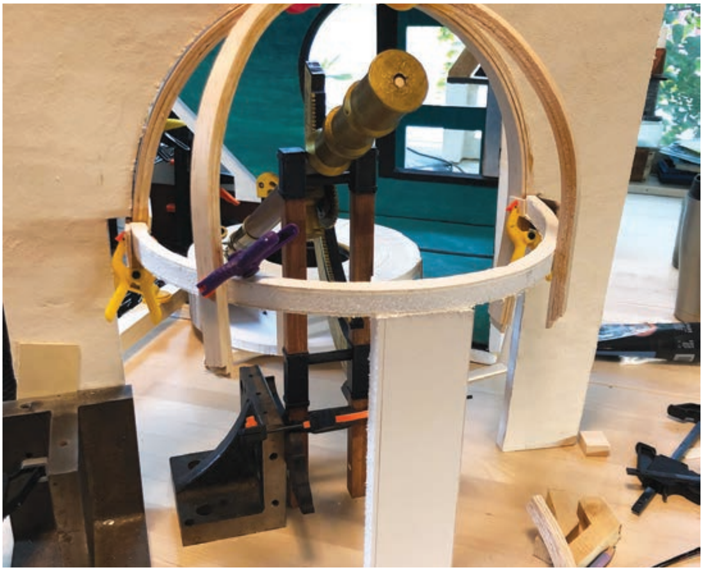


charts. I enjoy figuring out how to accomplish an idea. The navigation theme fits my background, and I enjoy scouring the internet for material and ideas."

Nancy isn't planning to sell her Herschel's piece, preferring to display it, or perhaps offer it to a club for raffle.

Nancy loves the problem solving element inherent is making miniatures. "It's all about what I can make with which materials. In reality, we can make anything we want, in any time period, any genre; it can be funny, serious, exact, surreal, a memory, or a future. Miniatures allow our imaginations to run amok, and I really enjoy figuring out how to make an idea come to reality."

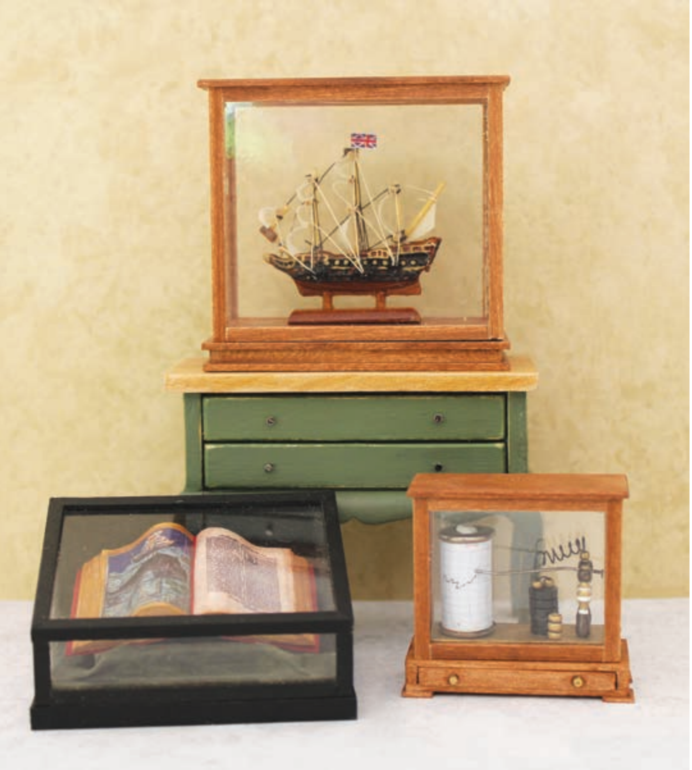
HERSCHEL'S
NAVIGATIONAL INSTRUMENTS
Est 1795
SUPPLIERS TO THE ROYAL NAVY



The future of miniatures is important to her. "Miniatures are interesting when you see them in person. We need to get out and show our stuff off! I am grateful for all of us because we keep a creative hobby alive, and it never ceases to amaze me how we can make tiny things from plain ordinary materials."

Next for Nancy is a miniature village that can hang on a wall. "It will be in 1:12 scale so that miniatures can be easily displayed and enjoyed, and the storefronts will be access doors. This is my answer to storage!"

Right: Making the miniature display cases were the highlight of this build for Nancy.



Aging a tub

Age an old bathtub for an abandoned look

BY BRAE OKTOBER

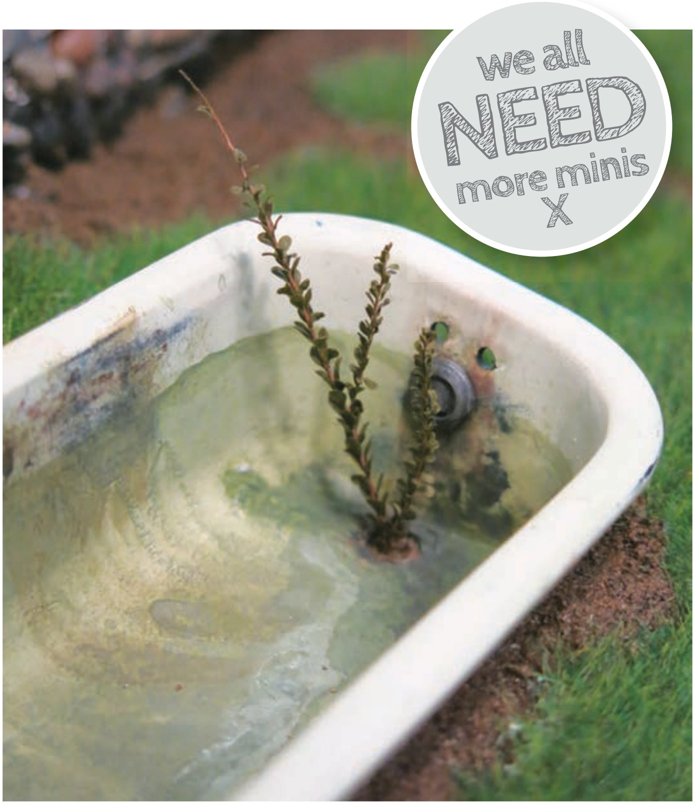
My old farm house wouldn't be complete without an abandoned bathtub buried somewhere on the grounds. I'm using a tub from Chrysnbon. You can also use this aging method for a tub in an abandoned or haunted dollhouse. Or, if you don't have a tub, how about a sink?

1 I didn't bother cleaning up the plastic at all, I just started with a covered spray of flat black.

Scale = 1:12

Materials:

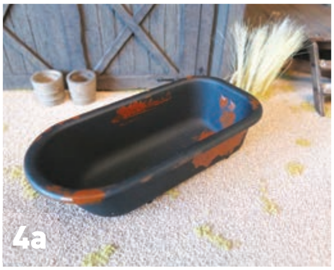
- **Chrysnbon tub**
- **Flat black spray paint**
- **Drill**
- **Testors Rust paint**
- **Container of water**
- **Salt**
- **Paint brush**
- **Airbrush**
- **Acrylic paint - brown, green and black**
- **Krylon Almond**
- **Sandpaper**
- **Q-Tip**
- **Paper towel**
- **Pen cap**
- **Super Glue**
- **Triple Thick Gloss Glaze**



2 First, I drilled out the holes for the plumbing in the back (not quite centered but this is easily fixed later), then touched up the paint on those areas. I didn't do the drain for reasons I'll get to.

3 I tried a technique called salt weathering. Every artist has their own way of doing this and it takes practice but here are the basics. Consider practicing this technique on a test item first.

4 I then added brushed on patches of Testors Rust paint.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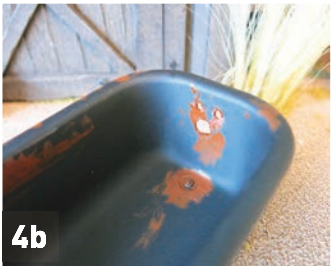
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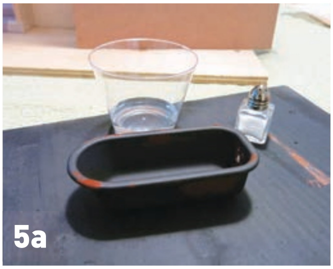
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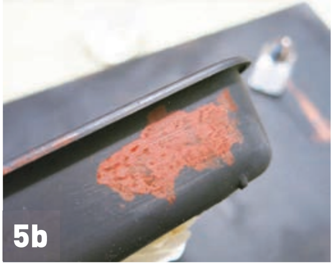
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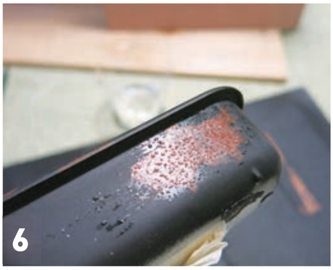
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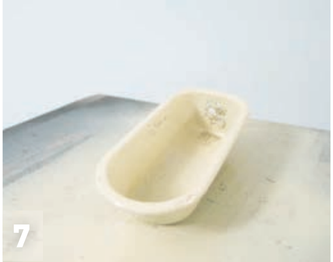
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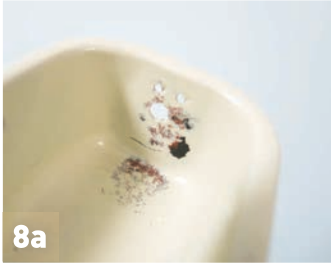
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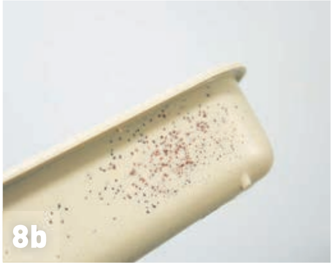
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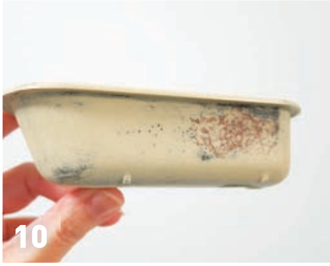

10

5 Apply water sparingly with a paint brush where the paint chips will go.

6 Apply salt over the areas with water. Move the salt into place with a the brush. The salt will adhere to the moist areas. Let it dry. Be gentle because the salt will stay but will be fragile.

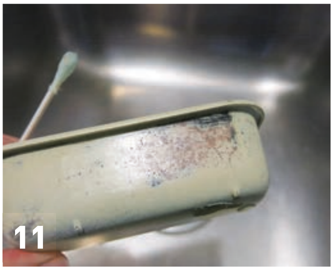
7 Apply a top coat of paint with an airbrush. Keep a distance as to not blow away the salt. Let dry.

8 I sprayed the tub Krylon Almond in satin finish, trying to use up some old paint on an item where over-spray and splatters won't matter at all. Of course, this old spray paint came out clean and crisp. I let it dry in my garage.

9 Next, I began the process of removing the salt by rubbing my finger over the grains. I did use a little water in some spots. It worked well, though not enough of the under layer showed for what I wanted. It worked better in the areas where the salt application was denser, as expected.

10 Sand the entire piece to remove the sheen. Mine was glossier than it should be for an old tub exposed to the elements. In some places this left well delineated scratches.

11 To bring back a lighter sheen, I applied nail polish remover to the entire surface.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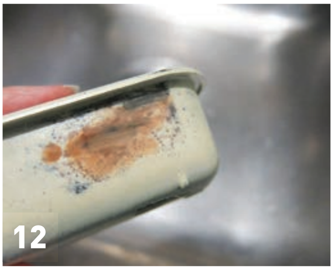
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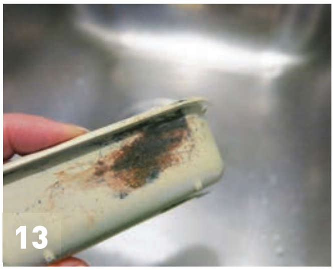
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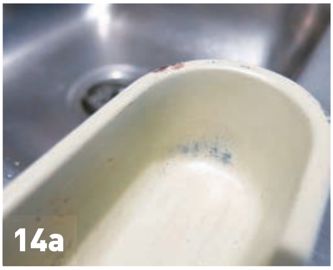
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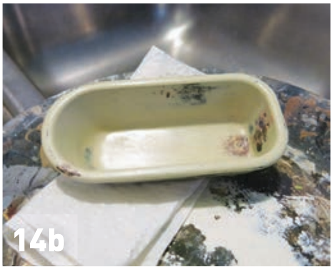
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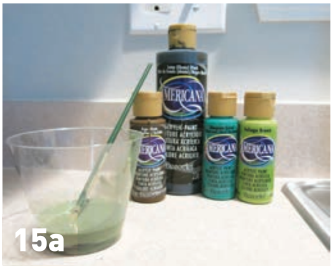
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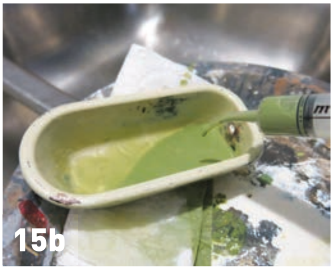
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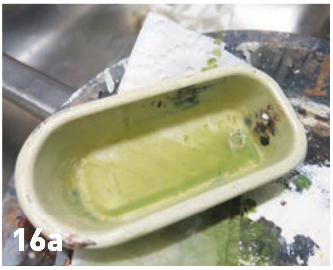
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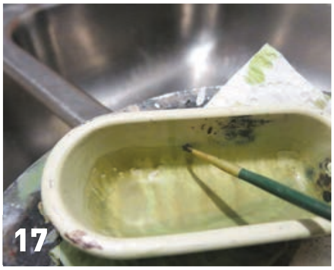
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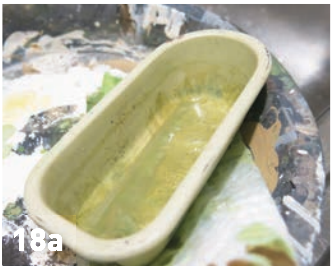
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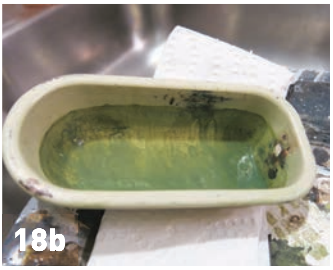
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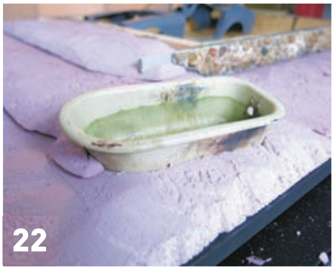
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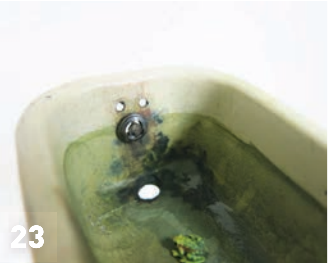
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12 To lift some of the paint in the rusted areas, I applied paint thinner with a Q-Tip. This lifted the paint slightly. I used a paper towel to lift the paint entirely in areas.

13 I smoothed out the obvious scratches with paint thinner, this time just letting the paint dry without applying the paper towel.

14 After the paint dried, I washed the tub with soap and water and put it in a tray using a paper towel to angle it slightly.

15 To get the tub to look like it had been filled with algae water a few times over, I made a mixture of brown and green paint (with a tiny dash of black) and poured it into the bath.

16 I kept removing a little bit of the mixture with a syringe and then dropping some back in. After I had a good result, I left the remaining liquid to dry.

17 Then it was time for the ring around the tub. I made another green paint wash and poured some into the tub. I then took a smaller brush and kept making rounds, dropping liquid down the sides.

18 They were such light layers of watered down paint that they dried quickly, allowing me to build up layers of rings. I then let it dry completely after this step.

19 It was too light and too matte when dry, so I did a third round with darker green and satin varnish mixed in.

20 I cut away the necessary material to put the tub into the ground. You can see why I didn't bother with the legs.

21 This will allow for the slight angle I built into the sludge and the doors (swinging or rolling) will clear it easily. I already love it just buried in foam!

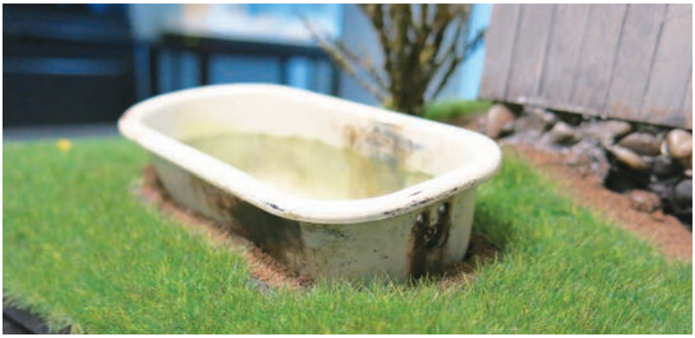
22 I added the final aging on the exterior using random paint washes and dry brushing.

23 Though the faucets are long gone, I added the overflow cover plate made from a pen cap.

24 I painted it silver and then aged it with washes before gluing it in place. I also drilled out the drain hole and painted the subsequent bare plastic. I added gloss painted details to the interior using Triple Thick Gloss Glaze, like there's always some moisture in there. With all the rust and grime, you can't even tell there was a drilling misfire. It looks like heavy cast iron!

Yes, the tiny frog feels right at home. I've named him Herbert. He was made by Amanda Skinner.

Visit http://www.otterine.com/blog to see more of my work.



Gravely speaking in miniature

Meghan Smith challenged herself by using new materials for her miniature cemetery

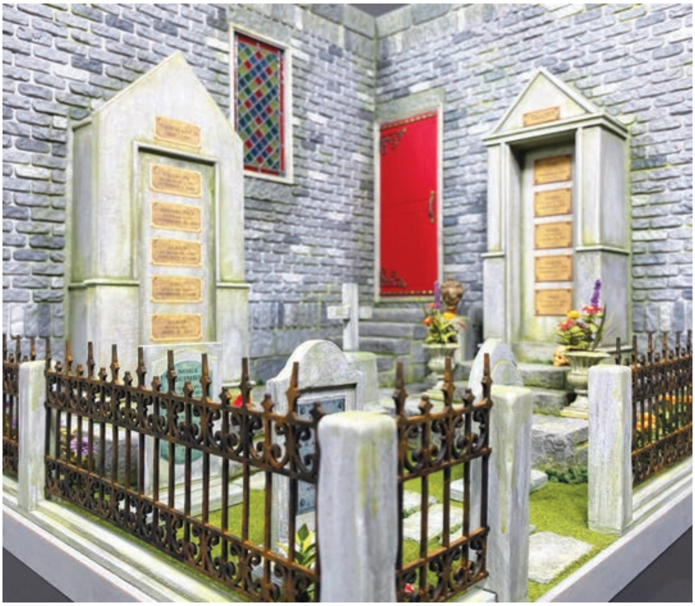
BY PAM NORTH

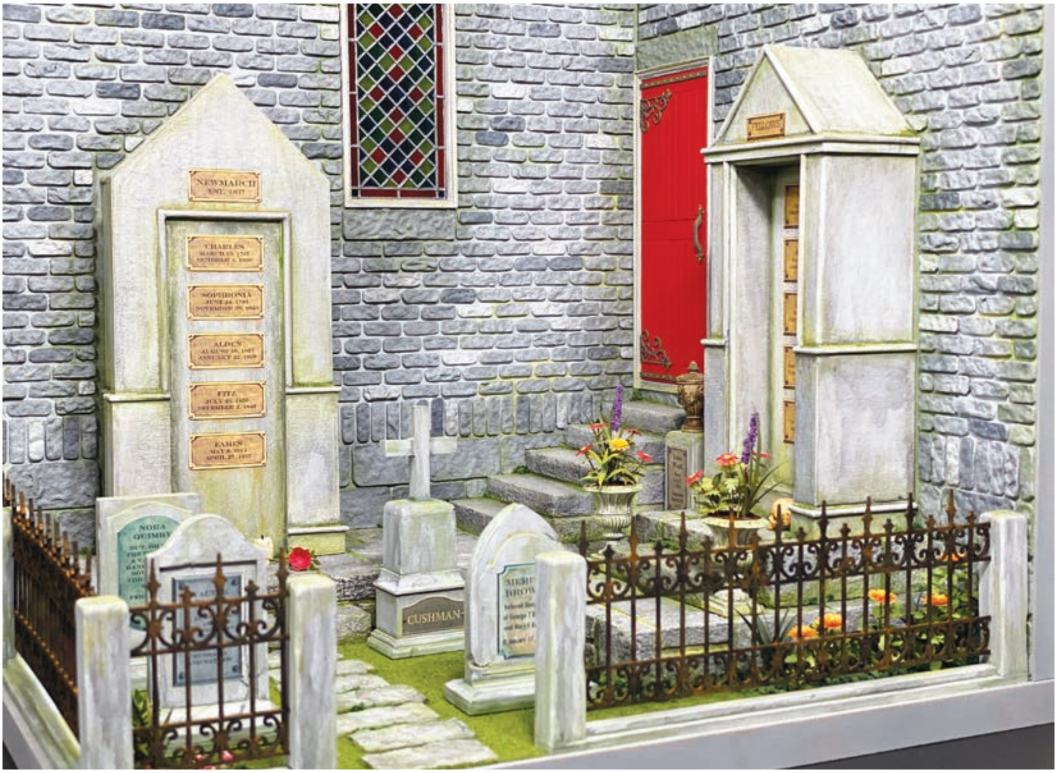
Meghan Smith has loved miniatures for as long as she can remember. "Holding something small and perfect in the palm of my hand has always filled me with a sense of wonder," she remarked. "As a child I made my own miniatures out of cardboard, recycled materials, paint, twigs, rocks - anything I could get my little hands on. If I had glue, I was unstoppable when in the midst of my creative fervor."

Her recent piece is *Gone But Not Forgotten* in 1:12 scale, made after she discovered the Creatin' Contests held by HBS/miniatures.com, and she was its First Time Entrant Winner winner for 2020. She knew she wanted to enter the contest, but she was overwhelmed at the idea of doing a complete scene. "I have made dollhouses and furniture to go into dollhouses, but I never really got around to putting the two together into a cohesive vision."

She settled on the idea of a cemetery, as she spends lots of time in cemeteries for genealogy research, or even just walking and getting fresh

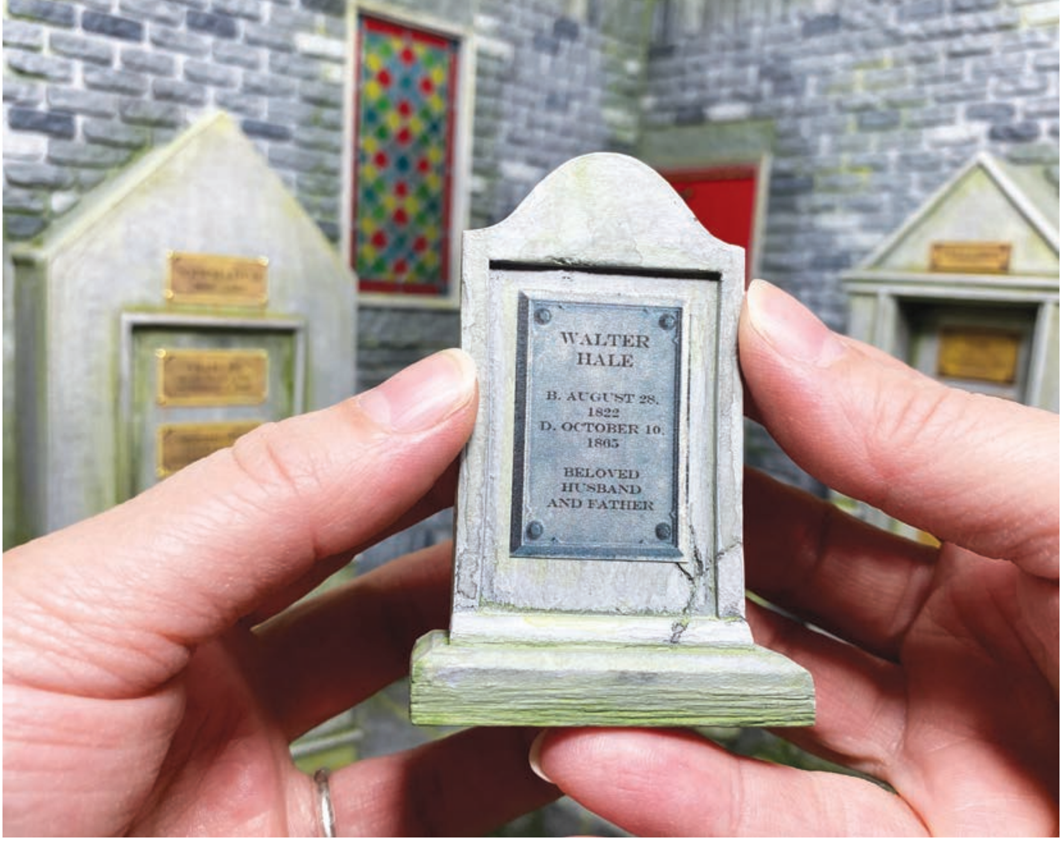
Below left: Miniature artist Meghan Smith. **Below:** Before stating this project, Meghan did a lot of research on life and death in New England during the 1800s

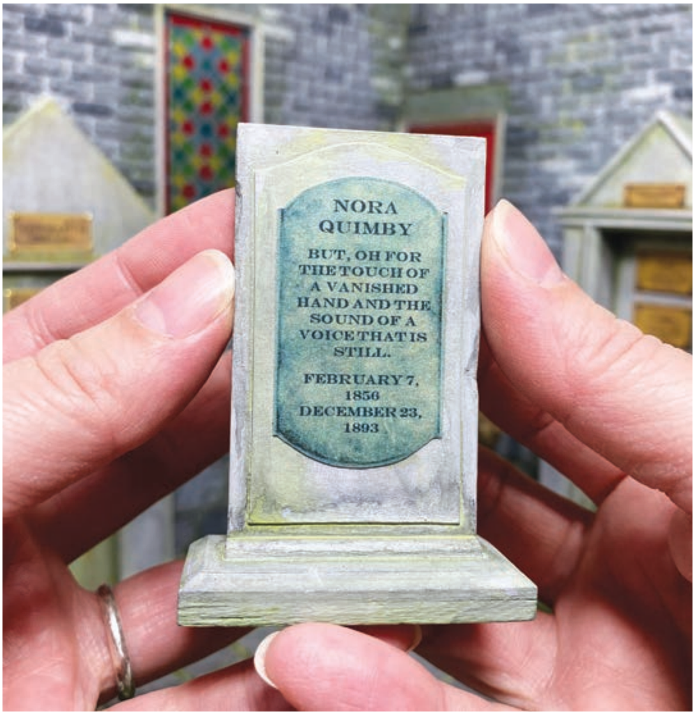



NEWMARCH
CHARLES
SOPHRONIA
ALDEN
FITZ
EAMES
NORA QUIMBY
CUSHMAN

air. “Cemeteries are generally beautiful and quiet, and I appreciate the loss, love, and reverence that families pour into cemeteries to remember their departed loved ones. I portrayed an old cemetery but the flowers are fresh because people still care, remember, and visit. After the year that was 2020, I think that is a powerful concept.”

Meghan did a lot of research on what life/death was like in New England in the 1800s. “There were several pandemics like cholera and scarlet fever, but also the nature of hard living and


WALTER
HALE
B. AUGUST 28.
1822
D. OCTOBER 10.
1865
BELOVED
HUSBAND
AND FATHER


NORA
QUIMBY
BUT, OH FOR
THE TOUCH OF
A VANISHED
HAND AND THE
SOUND OF A
VOICE THAT IS
STILL.
FEBRUARY 7,
1856
DECEMBER 23,
1893

Right: Meghan used a product called FastMâché for much of the stone work.

harsh winters claimed a lot of lives. I tried to tell these stories through the names and dates in this cemetery."

Various materials were used to make her piece. The bricks were hand-cut from heavy recycled packing material. The mausoleums are made from basswood, balsa wood, foam core, and paper. The platforms and stairs are from a product called FastMâché, which she used to hand-sculpt each stone. The door is basswood and chipboard with brass nail detailing. The tombstones are various wood

MERCY
BROWN

Isaac
Ward
Born
July 27,
1824
Departed
March 26,
1872

Above: Meghan spends lots of time in cemeteries for genealogy research.

scraps, balsa, chipboard and paper with brass nail detailing, and the landscaping is shake-on grass powder and spongy faux moss. Everything was painted with acrylics. The mausoleum and tombstone plaques were created digitally and printed on card stock. The flower urns are filled with foam core, topped in tea leaves, then filled with flowers. The window is Plexiglass, lead golfer's tape, and gallery glass paint. The purchased faux wrought iron fence is laser cut chip board

"The two biggest elements of this piece are texture and color," Meghan explained. "I used various techniques to achieve each. For texture I used materials like packaging material, along with the FastMâché, which has an almost pitted concrete texture naturally. Color was multiple washes of watered-down acrylics on the stonework, with pops of saturated color, like in the red door. The most unique thing I did was to make my mausoleums and tombstones out of non-stone-like material. Instead of using paperclay or FastMâché or textured paint, I focused on recreating weathered granite by layering washes of watered-down acrylic paint. I finished off all stonework with a wash of various greens to add that mossy, aged look. It exceeded my expectations in regard to how crisp and clean it all came out. I have never worked with any miniature landscaping materials so that was an unknown variable. I liked the contrast of all the grays and greens with the bright lively colors of the door, window and flowers."

> 'The most unique thing I did was to make my mausoleums and tombstones out of non-stone-like material.'

Meghan finds inspiration

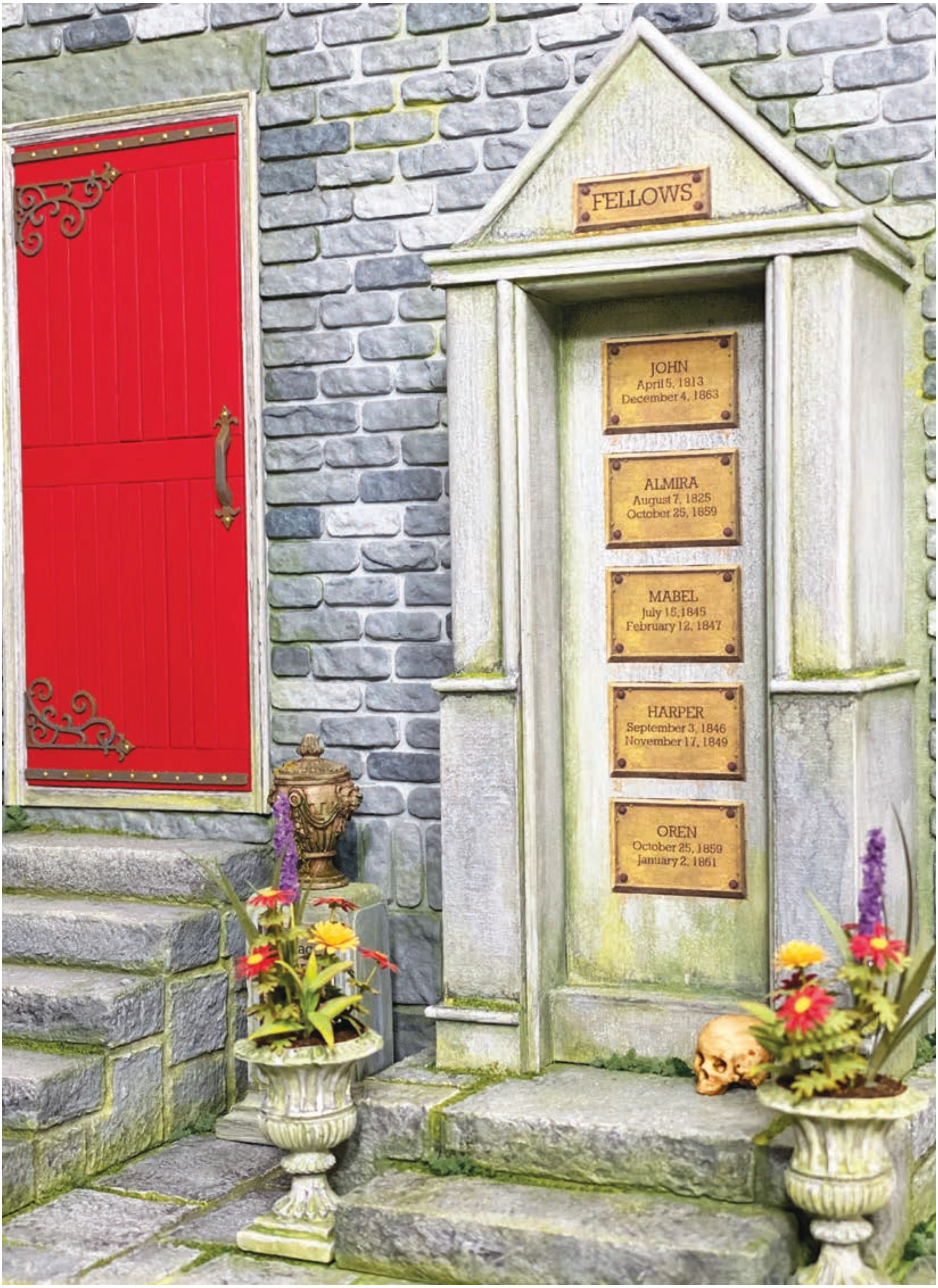
everywhere. “Growing up on the coast of Maine has given me a great appreciation for the deep blues of the ocean, the grays of the stormy skies, the greens of the lush forests, the textures of nature, and in the stonework of old buildings.”

Always looking ahead, Meghan projected, “I have some wild and crazy projects planned. I intend to keep creating and sharing my work for as long as it brings joy to me and the community of which I am part.”

GETINTOUCH:

Dollhouse Smithery, LLC
Meghan Smith
Etsy: https://www.etsy.com/shop/DollhouseSmithery
Instagram: @dollhouse_smithery

NEWMARCH
EST. 1837
CHARLES
MARCH 13, 1787
OCTOBER 3, 1836
SOPHRONIA
JUNE 24, 1793
NOVEMBER 29, 1843
ALDEN
AUGUST 19, 1827
JANUARY 22, 1829
FITZ
JULY 23, 1820
DECEMBER 2, 1849
EAMES
MAY 8, 1813
APRIL 27, 1857


FELLOWS
JOHN
April 5, 1813
December 4, 1863
ALMIRA
August 7, 1825
October 25, 1859
MABEL
July 15, 1845
February 12, 1847
HARPER
September 3, 1846
November 17, 1849
OREN
October 25, 1859
January 2, 1861

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Glowing pumpkin

Add some light to your mini Jack-o'-lantern

BY KIM SANBORN

As the fall season approaches and a chill fills the air, pumpkins are bountiful and Halloween is just around the corner. This project is the perfect transition into the fall season. You can find these little foam pumpkins in the floral section of craft stores.

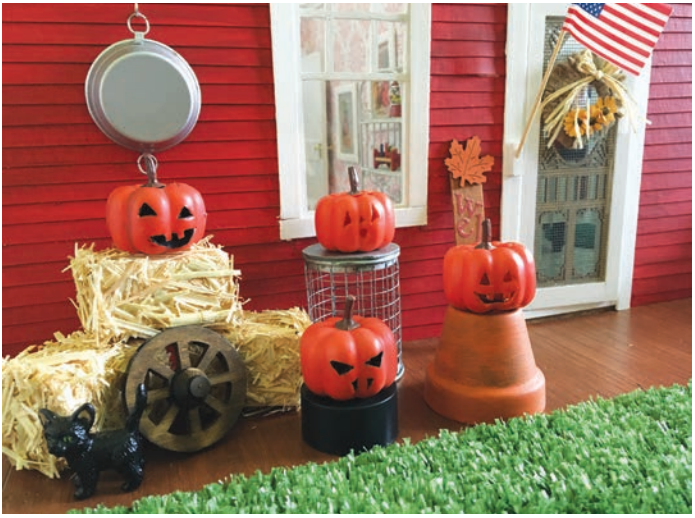
1 Sketch your pumpkin face on the outside. Use a pencil so you can easily erase any accidental pencil marks to adjust your lines.

2 Carefully, using the X-ACTO knife to puncture the outside of the pumpkin, following along the pencil lines you made. To add more realism, make a groove around the top of the pumpkin as a lid.

Scale = 1:12

Materials:

- Plastic mini pumpkins
- X-ACTO knife
- Pencil
- Acrylic Paint - orange and/ or brown
- Small paint brush
- Optional - LED or battery operated tea lights



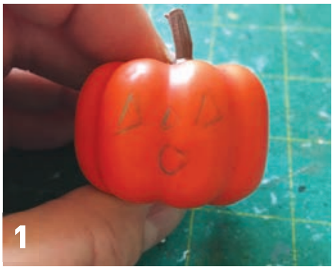
3 Remove the Styrofoam inside to create cavities where the eyes, nose and mouth are. At this point, you can just color these with orange or black acrylic paint or you can continue to carve your Jack-o'-lantern.

4 The following steps are very similar to carving a real pumpkin. Remove the top carefully using the X-ACTO knife.

5 Scrape out the inside using the X-ACTO knife. Make sure that you remove the Styrofoam all the way through to the facial features. If you want to add a LED light, be sure to remove enough of the foam from the inside.

6 Paint the inside with orange or black acrylic paint being sure to get into the crevices of the face.

7 The opening could also be placed at the bottom of the Jack-o-lantern and then place it on a battery operated tea light candle.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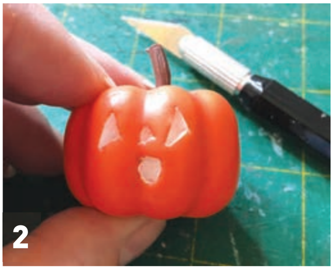
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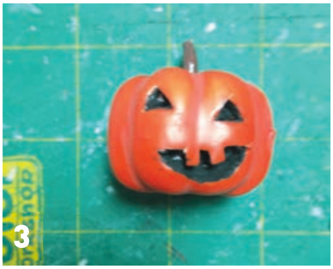
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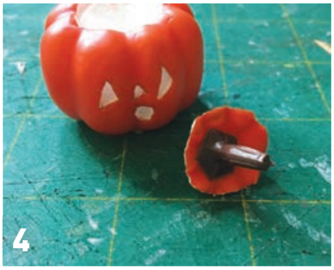
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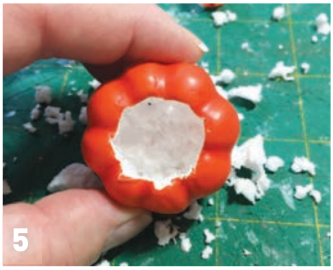
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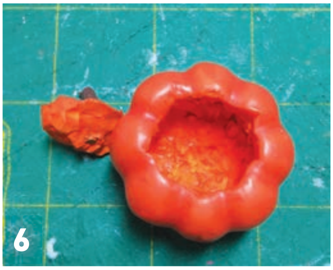
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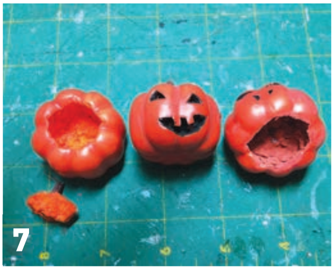
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There are as many options for decorating these mini pumpkins as there are full sized ones. Let your imagination guide you for some spooky Halloween décor.

we all NEED more minis X

Transforming a dream castle

Building this massive fantasy castle was a therapeutic journey for Kelly Kuehnert

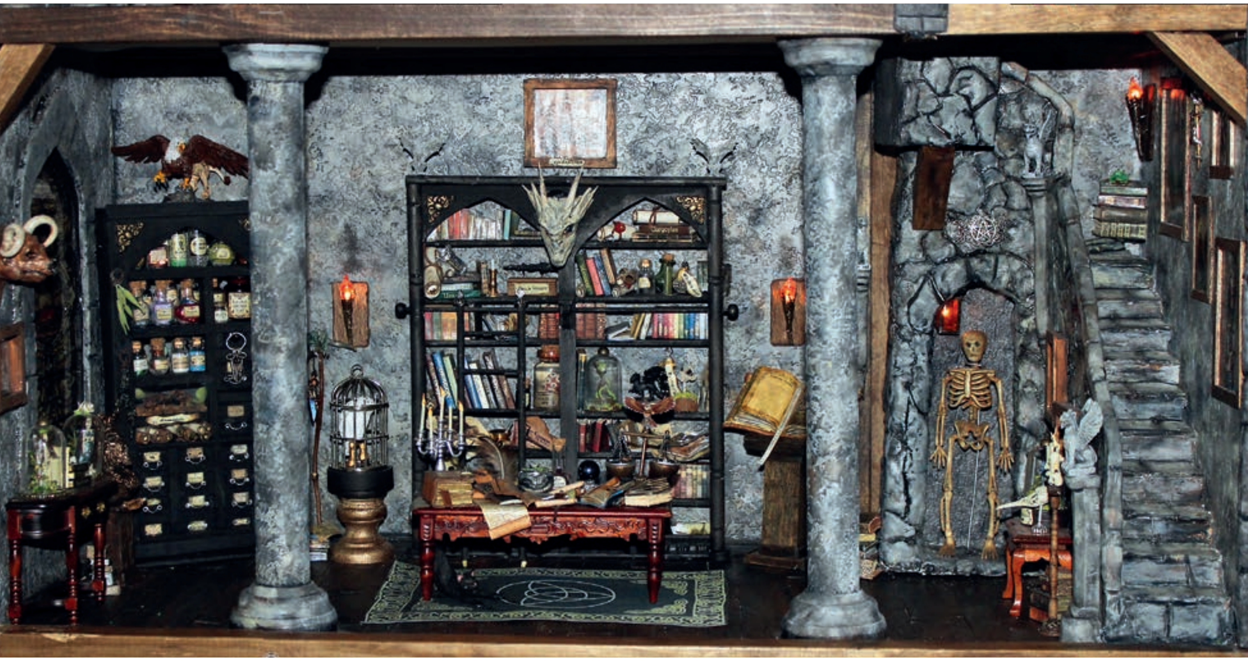
BY SANDRA HARDING

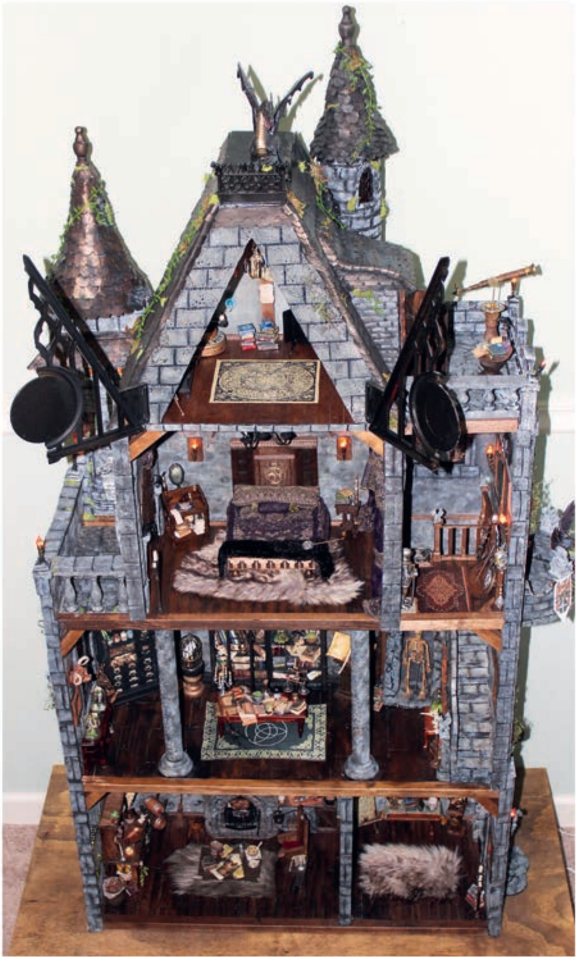
Perhaps this fabulous castle was inspired by Kelly Kuehnert's father as he didn't read her ordinary fairy stories when she was a little girl, preferring instead the likes of *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*. Her mother may also have added to her fantasy world, as her favorite story was *The Wizard of Oz*, and they regularly watched the film together. So it's no wonder that Kelly fell in love with the idea of tiny people, hobbits and fairies, and the small dwellings and worlds they lived in.

When Kelly was seven or eight a school visit to a

> 'Not just any old castle, it had to have a strong Irish/Celtic influence with a strong female sorceress.'

Below: The library also serves as a spell room. Books full of magical know-how line the shelves.





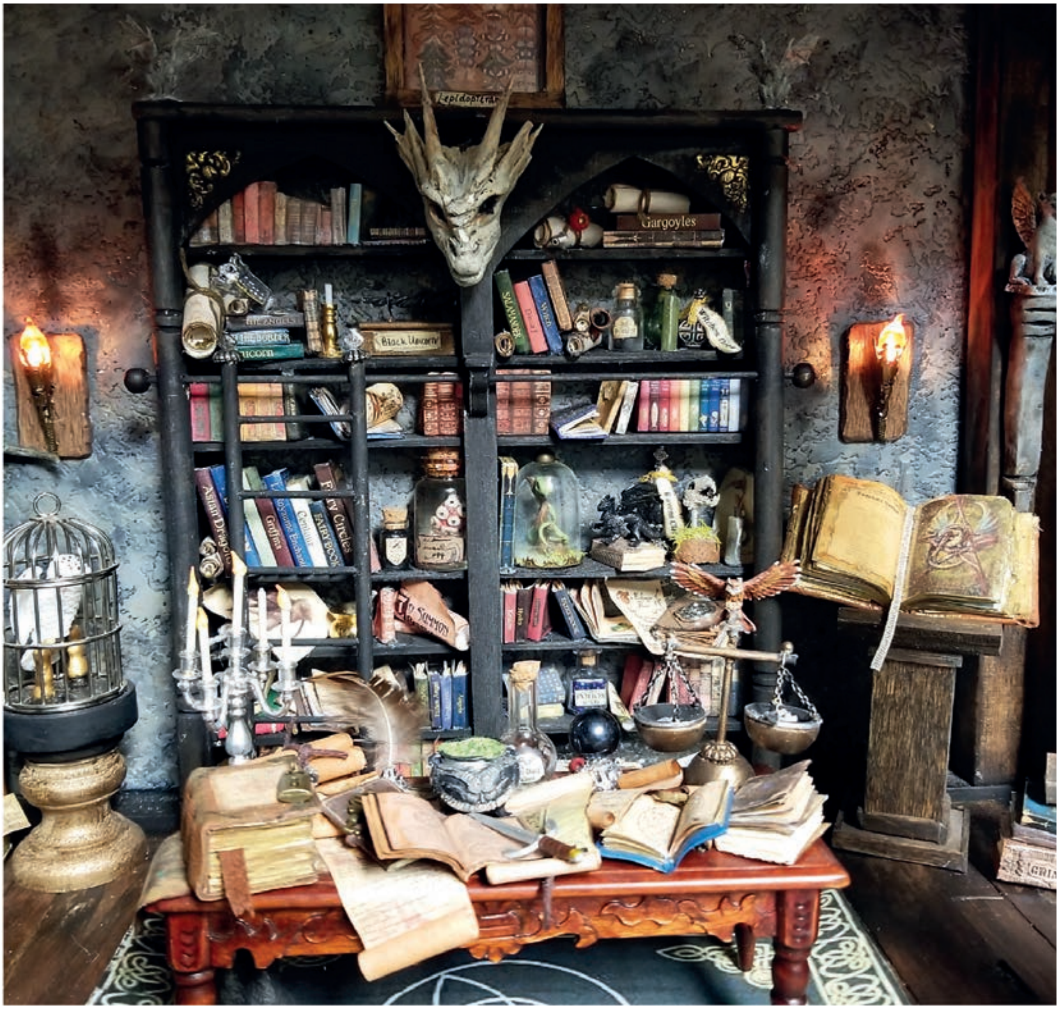
Above left: The castle is 5', 1" tall, 2', 9" wide, and each room is 11" deep. **Above:** The kitchen is packed with supplies and food.

children's museum really did give Kelly a nudge towards miniatures in a big way. It was there that she saw her very first magical dollhouse, large and full of lights, and she was hooked forever. She even remembers getting into trouble because she kept leaving her group to go back and have another look.

For many years, the usual reasons of growing up, working, having a family and responsibilities, meant that Kelly did not fully develop her miniature passion. So it was only five years ago that Kelly started making small scale fairy houses for friends, family and commissions.

She then realized that she wanted to make something really grand for herself, and it simply had to be a castle. Not just any old castle, it had to have a strong Irish/ Celtic influence with a strong female sorceress.

Her family would all be descended from sorceresses with magical powers of course, and she had to be fond of dragons, as the family has been bound to them



Above: A closer look into the library where the table is filled with piles of spell books. The large dragon head in the library was made by Kelly.

through the centuries. Now for the real magical bit, in my opinion. It can only be that Kelly has magical powers herself to be able to transform a KidKraft Princess Cinderella Royal Dream Castle in 1:6 scale, into the fantastic creation you see here.

To start with the inside was papered with a stone textured and paintable wallpaper, and the outside is foam board shaped to look like blocked stones. A piece of drywall was used to build up the right side of the castle and birch wood was used for the floors on each level. Kelly then cut out the doors and windows where she wanted them, and it now measures 5',1" tall, 2', 9" wide, and each room is 11" deep. Wow!

Obviously Kelly has learned a lot in a short space of time as she has made almost everything you see, including the stairs and the main pieces of furniture. The bed, dressers, fireplaces, cabinets, picture

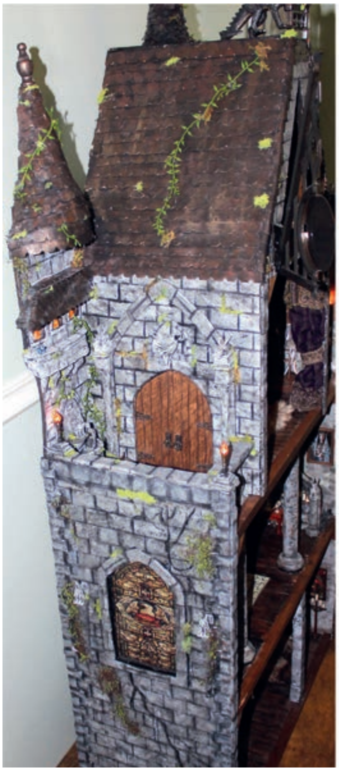
Right: A proud dragon sits on the top of the grand castle.

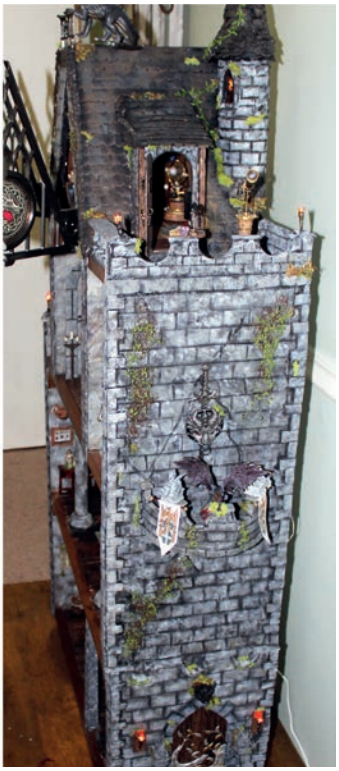
‘The bed, dressers, fireplaces, cabinets, picture frames, potions, weapons rack, candles and candle sticks are all her work.’

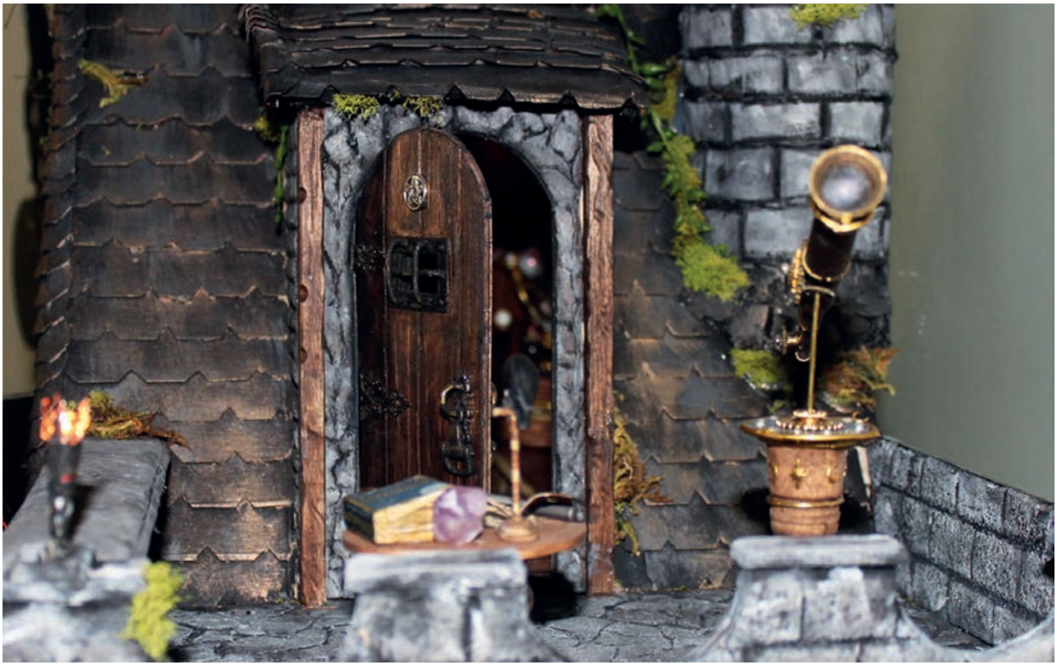
frames, potions, weapons rack, candles and candle sticks are all her work. The large dragon head in the library, the gargoyle head on the balcony and dragon head over the front door Kelly made with polymer clay. Considering that she had not used any since she was six-years old, she must have a good memory too – or is that just natural talent?

A nice touch is that she has some treasured memories of a

GRIMOIR







Above: The balcony has a telescope and potion table set up for long distance spells!

dear departed friend placed in the castle, and on each build she incorporates at least one of these special items. Kelly knew that her friend would love the idea. There are also a few bought items here: the kettle and cauldron, pottery jugs and skull heads, some candle sticks, one dragon, and a couple of gargoyles, and a few items from a local comic book store. Some of the book covers, potions and labels were from Etsy, the swords were from Handlry, as were the weapons and helmets, and the winged jewelry over the bed was from Fearless Apparel.

On a sad note, Kelly had to take early retirement as a hair stylist due to a very bad accident, enduring many months of pain. On a positive note, having this project, and building this amazing creation proved to be really therapeutic for her.

Here she was able to give her imagination and creativity a free rein and she felt that she had a purpose again. Kelly calls her workshop her ‘happy place’, and she plans to create more house builds using funds from the sale of the castle. I look forward to following more of Kelly’s creations – they are bound to be magical.

Creepy pumpkin

Make a pumpkin that just might come to life

BY RANDALL CASTLE

We are getting ready for a spooky Halloween walk over here and needed a creepy pumpkin to add to the experience. We found this miniature foam pumpkin at the craft store. My human will walk you through this so you can make some creepy pumpkins for yourself!

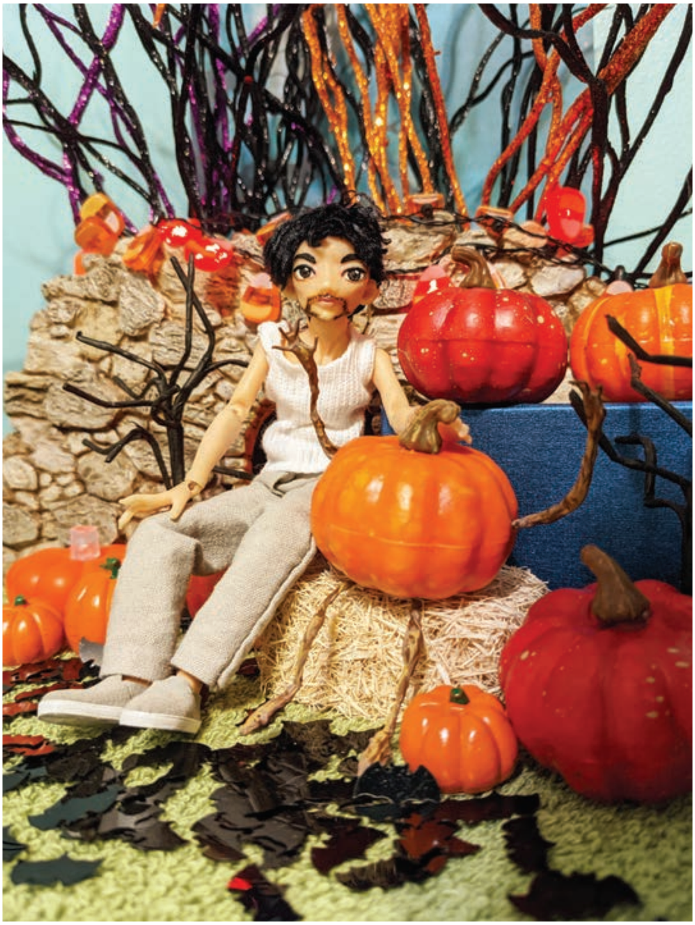
1 First, cut 4 pieces of 3'' long wire.

2 Twist 2 together and leave about 1/4'' untwisted at the end. Repeat with 2 more wires.

Scale = 1:12

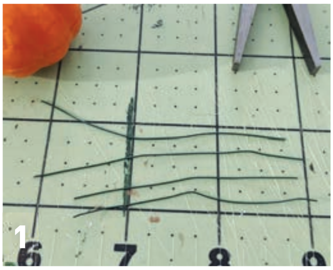
Materials:

- **Foam mini pumpkin**
- **Wire**
- **Wire cutters**
- **Tacky Glue**
- **Flat pliers**
- **Round pliers**
- **Acrylic paint - brown, light brown, dark brown**
- **Small drill**
- **Toothpick**
- **Super Glue**



3 Twist the 2 twisted pieces together so all 1/4'' untwisted ends are at one end. These will be fingers. Set aside and do it all over again for the other arm.

4 Use some round nose pliers to curl the fingers and thumb. Be sure you make opposite hands! Our pumpkin ended up with 2 left hands.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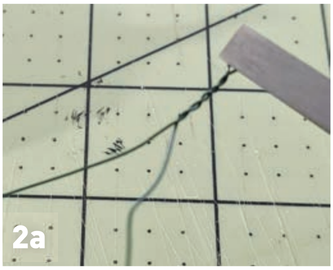
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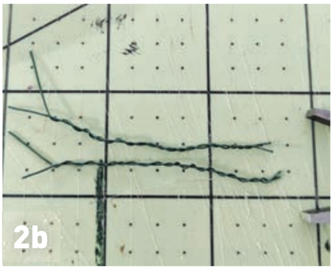
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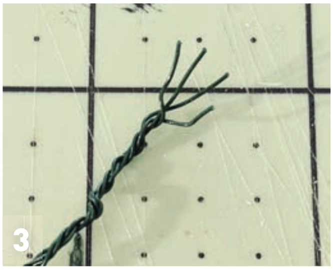
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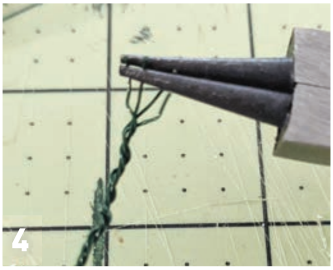
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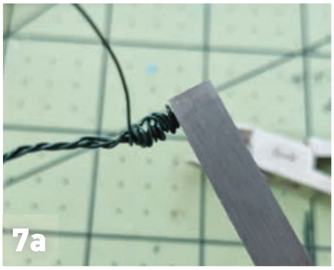
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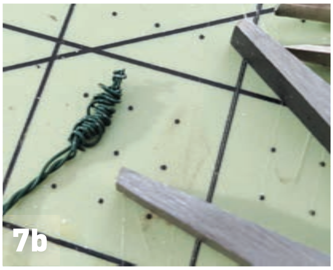
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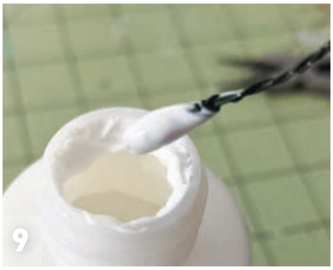
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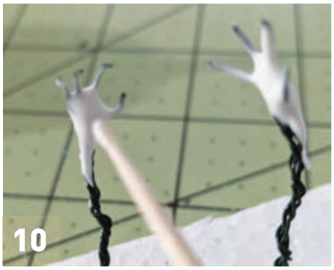
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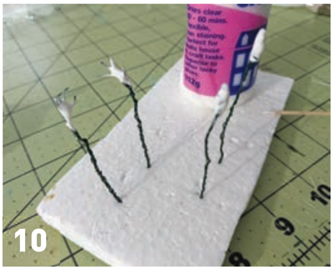
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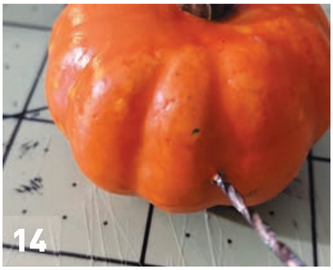
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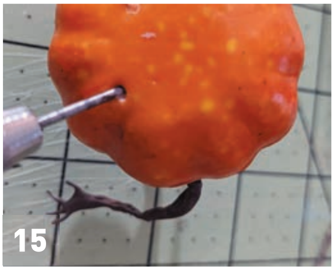
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5 For the legs, twist three pieces of 3'' long wire together.

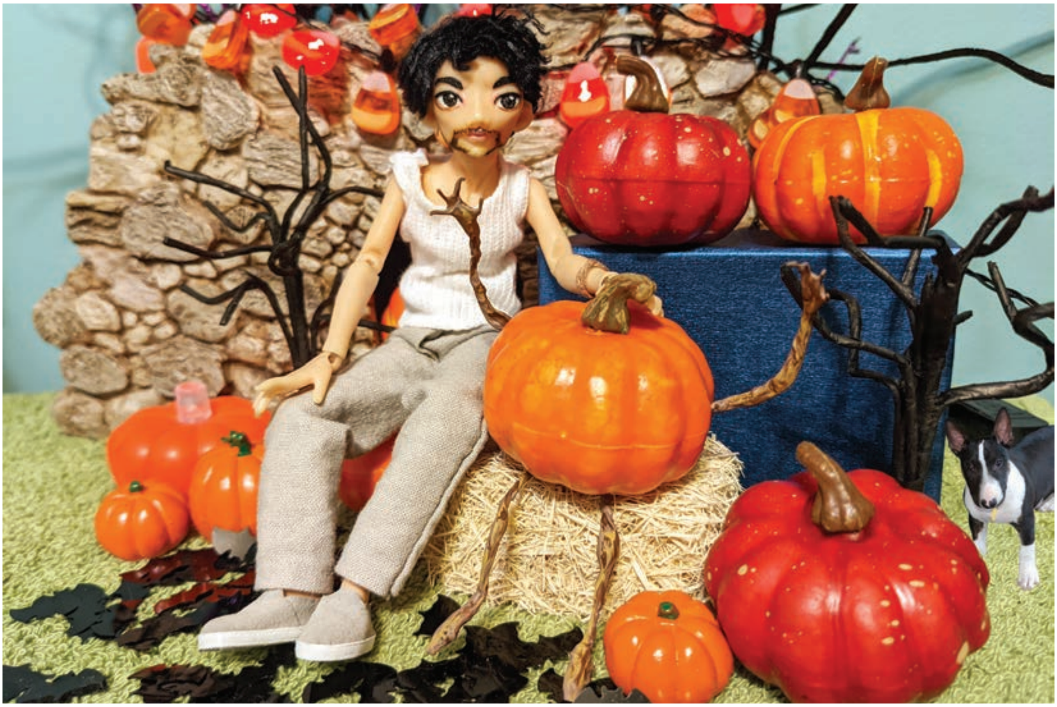
6 Curl up one end a little and then twist another 3'' long piece all around the 3 wires to make a foot.

7 Flatten the foot with some flat nose pliers.

8 Repeat and make the other leg with a foot.

9 Dip the feet in Tacky Glue and then use a toothpick to wipe some glue up the legs for some knobby knees.

10 Dip the hands in the glue then use a toothpick to separate the glue between the fingers, but let



some stay to form the palm. You could add some glue to the tips of the fingers and let it get sort of tacky and then shape for pointed fingers if you like.

11 Wipe some glue up the arm with a toothpick. Let it all dry quickly in front of a fan.

12 Dip all the limbs in brown paint.

13 I hung the legs upside down so the feet would get pointy while drying as the paint dripped. Let dry.

14 Use a drill or needle tool to punch two holes in the foam pumpkin for the arm holes.

15 Do the same for 2 leg holes underneath the pumpkin.

16 Test fit the limbs into the holes and trim the wire length if needed.

17 Glue in all the limbs with Super Glue. Let it dry.

18 Pose how you want the limbs to be by bending the wire. The acrylic paint and Tacky Glue are flexible and should bend with the wire. If you get any rips just add more paint.

19 Use a light brown and dark brown paint to add definition to the limbs and match the color on the pumpkin stem with a small paint brush.

Pose your creepy pumpkin in a spooky scene and have a Happy Halloween!

My human hooked you up right? Come on over to Instagram @randall_castle and get to know me and my crew. We would dig it if you joined our adventures!

Miniature art inspired by a novel

An antique suitcase can be used to bring a miniature scene to life

BY MARC LA FONTIJN

After finishing two dollhouses and a few room boxes I felt it was time to challenge myself with something different. I am a big fan of Disney's Phantom Manor in Paris. After learning that it was partly based on the novel *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens I knew what I wanted to make.

I have a lot of vintage suitcases in my home so I decided to use one of the smaller suitcases for the project's base. My Marie Antoinette project, which was featured in American Miniaturist issue 216 was the second project that was made inside an old suitcase.

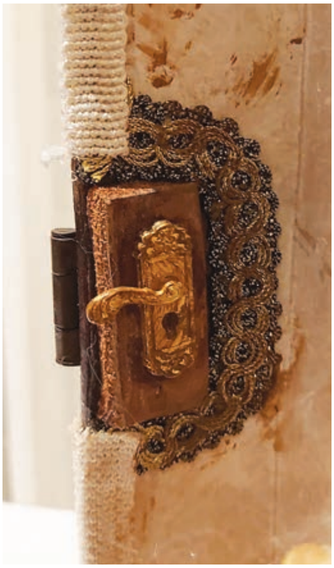
> ‘I have a lot of vintage suitcases in my home so I decide to use one of the smaller suitcases for project's base.’

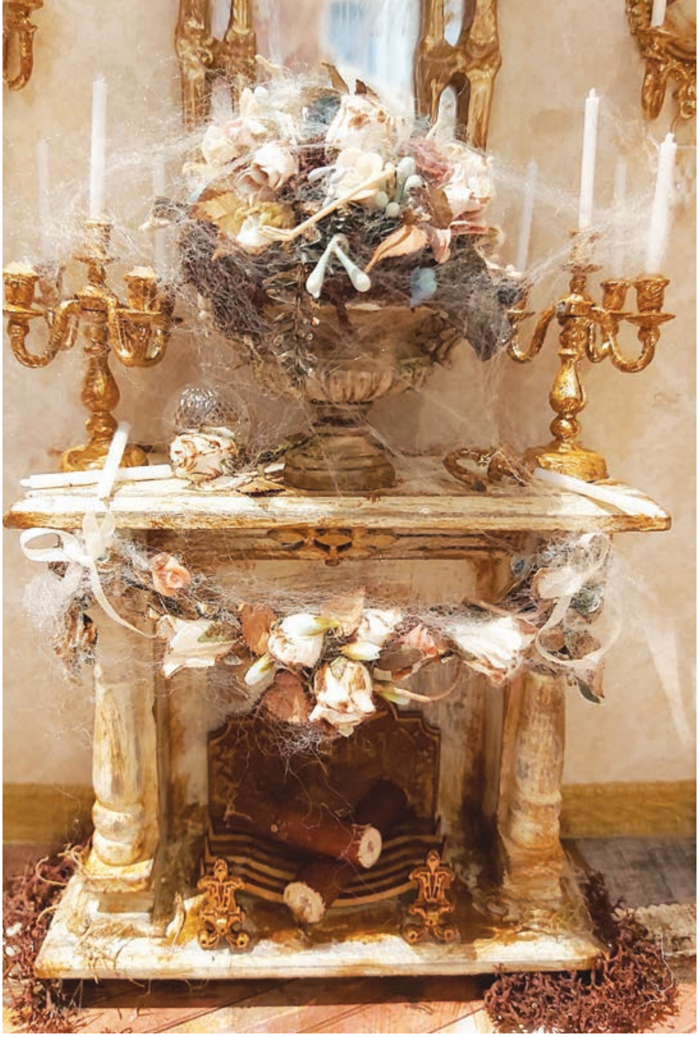
I did a lot of research, reading the 1861 novel and watching the 1934 movie, Great Expectations with Helena Bonhem Carter as Miss Havisham a few times to be sure not to miss any details.

Miss Havisham is a character in the novel. She is a wealthy spinster who was once jilted at the altar. After being so emotionally damaged by this rejection, she insisted on wearing her wedding dress for the rest of her life. She also kept everything just as it was on her wedding day. After so many years had passed, the wedding flowers were wilted,

Below left: The suitcase shown before Marc began the project. **Below:** The candle that may have caused the veil to catch fire.

GREAT





Above: A door handle was glued to the suitcase latch. **Right:** The fireplace is covered in cob webs and the flowers are wilted.

the cake was moldy and the food was spoiled on the table. Her mansion had turned into ruins. Her wedding dress had caught fire and after that she was bound to a wheelchair because of the injuries.

> ‘It was not easy to work with the old suitcase because it was almost 100 years old.’

It was not easy to work with the old suitcase because it was almost 100 years old. Due to the ravages of time the shape of the suitcase was no longer straight. This actually felt like a perfect beginning for a story of dilapidation.

I have seen other projects from miniature artists with the theme of this novel and most made their scene with dark tones, but I wanted to keep it light.

The ceiling was made from gold trim that I sprayed an off-white. The wall chandeliers were made from earrings. I already had the two chairs but they were broken, so I fixed them and gave them a coat of paint and then restyled and aged them. I did the same with the miniature wheelchair and dressed it up with a distressed bridal veil and crown. The picture frames were made from resin and the round table is made from a little jar that I covered with off-white linen. I distressed the linen by wetting

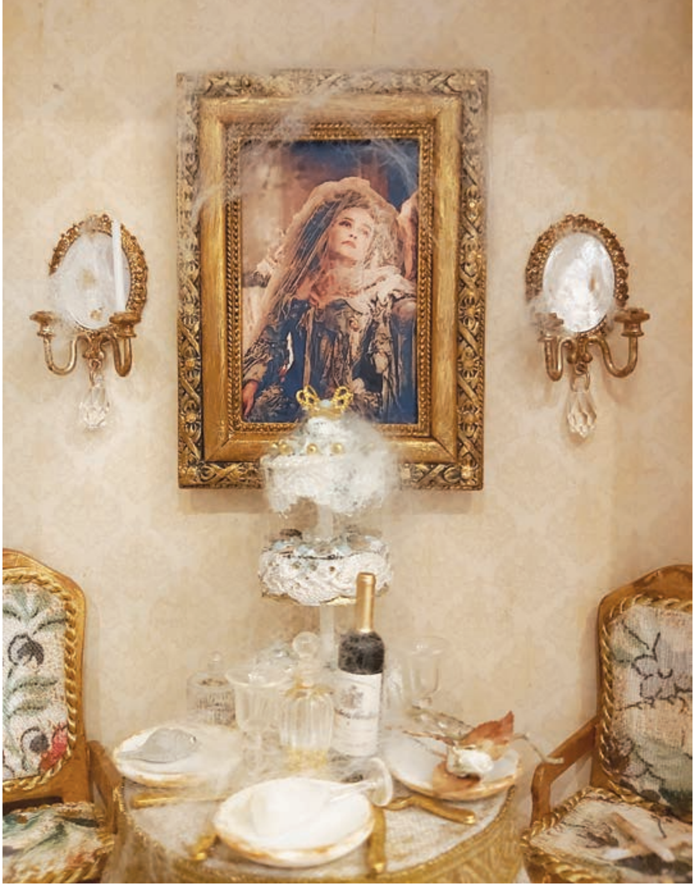
Right: The wheelchair was adorned with the torn veil and a crown. Marc's signature is to have a book in every scene.

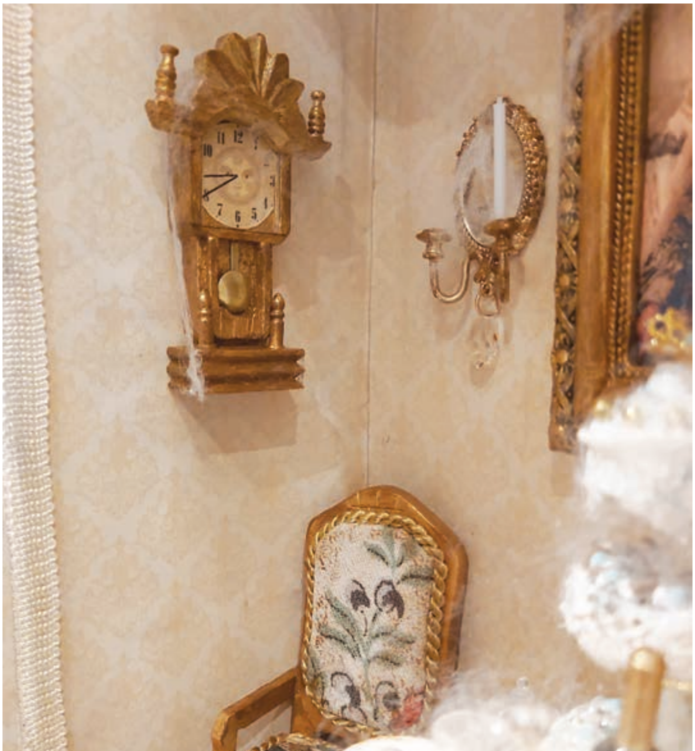
GREAT
EXPECTATIONS
CHARLES
DICKENS

it and then sprayed it with lots of starch to make it look realistic when it dried.

The ceiling chandelier was made from a plastic base I had in my stash. I added crystal beads and a golden crown to make it look grand. The floor was made from foam board. The fireplace was purchased online and was blank canvas, so I painted, restyled and aged it and then placed some wood logs into it to give it a realistic look.

The wilted flower bouquet, garland, fireplace flower arrangement and the moldy bridal cake were made my Dutch friend and miniature artist Coby Jacobs.





Above: A moldy cake was left in place from the wedding that never happened. **Left:** The clock on the wall stopped at the time the groom jilted the bride.

I also added some cobwebs, fungus, mice, and the fallen candle holder that caused her wedding dress to catch on fire. There is a miniature version of Charles Dickens's novel "Great Expectations" and a clock that stopped at 8:40 AM, which was the exact time her groom jilted her at the altar so many years ago. I hope you enjoy this piece as much as I enjoyed making it.

PROJECT

Garden basket

Fill this little basket with your mini fall harvest

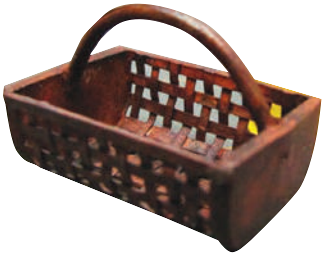
BY KRIS COMPAS

This month I made a garden hod, which is a multifunctional harvesting bucket that allows you to harvest and rinse vegetables all in one container.

1 Cut a rectangle of card stock to draw on. Draw a rectangle 1-1/8'' x 1-7/16''

2 Measure in from the original rectangle 1/16'' and draw a new rectangle inside the one you have all ready drawn.

3 Use your ruler to measure and mark at 1/16'' intervals on the long side of your rectangle. We are drawing the 'spokes' of the basket. When you have all the marks made, use your ruler to draw lines to connect the marks.



Scale = 1:12

Materials:

- Card stock
- Mat board
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Cutting knife
- Wood glue
- Q-Tip
- Sand paper
- Drill bit
- Acrylic paints
- Paint brush

4 In the photo I have darkened in every other space past the frame. Cut these out with a knife. I've got all of the lines drawn. You should have 10 spokes that are not darkened (not counting the frame).

5 Use your ruler or a steel straight edge to guide your knife while you cut out the darkened spaces. Do not cut into your frame.

6 Cut at least 9 strips that are 1/16'' wide from card stock. I did this by eye, it's not too important to measure these, they just need to be thin. These will be our weavers.

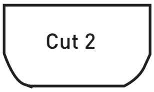
7 Start weaving, over the frame, under the first spoke, over and then under. Tweezers help to get the weavers between the spokes. Begin the next row doing the opposite, under the frame, over the first spoke, under and then over and so on until the weaving is finished.

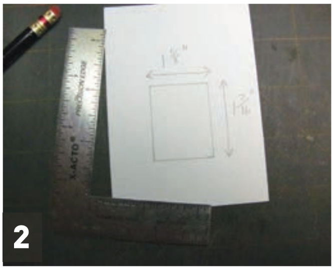
8 Glue the ends of the weavers to the frame with wood glue, be sure to turn the weaving over and glue the weavers on the back side.

9 With a knife, cut the woven mat away from the rest of the card stock. Set aside.

10 Trace the pattern onto mat board. Please, be careful and use a piece of

Pattern:

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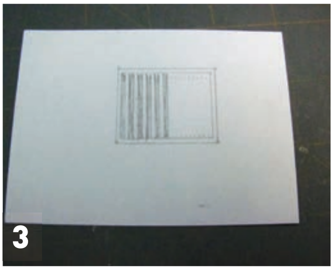
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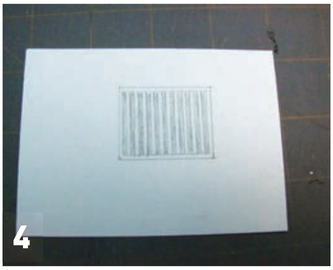
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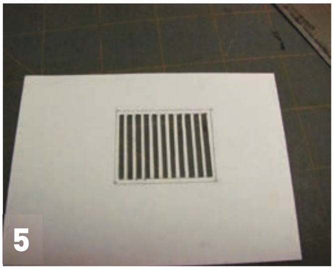
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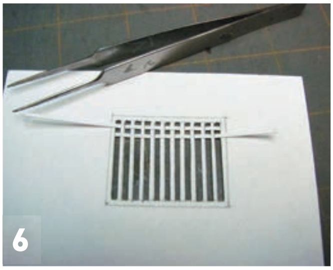
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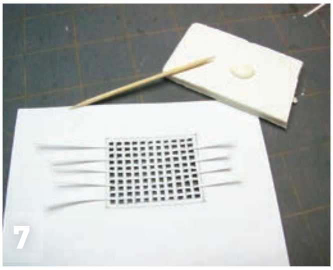
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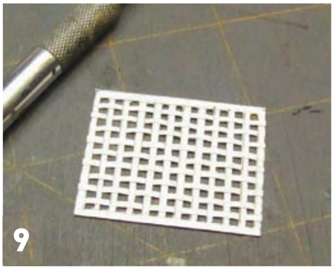
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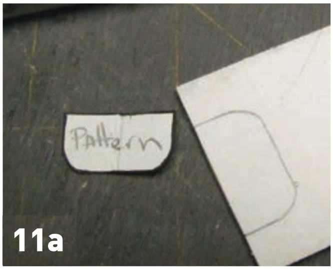

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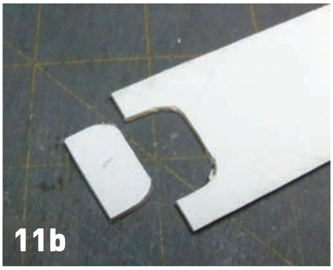
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mat board large enough so you can grasp and move around without getting your fingers too close to the knife blade.

11 Dry fit the woven mat to the ends. The long edge will be glued to the ends. We are going to glue a strip to the top edge. This way, if your woven mat is short this will be covered.

12 Measure and mark the middle of the ends. Measure down from the top 1/8'' and make a mark.

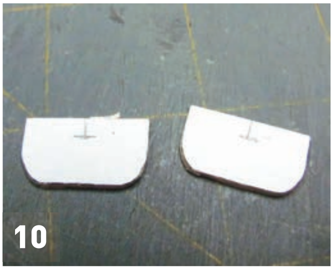
13 Drill a hole at the mark you made. Right now it doesn't matter the size of the drill bit.

14 A Q-Tip is used for the handle. Cut the cotton ends off. The Q-Tip needs to be thinner. Use sand paper to open the seam. I start sanding back and forth while the sand paper is wrapped around the stick. When I got a little bit started I then knew where the seam was and could sand there and open up the rest of the paper seam.

15 Peel the paper away until you have about 1/16'' in diameter. Cut the extra paper away and glue the seam down.

16 Find a drill bit that's the same diameter as your stick.

17 Drill into the end, at the hole you drilled before, with the bit point-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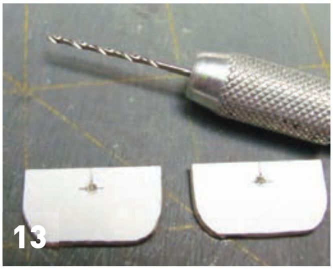
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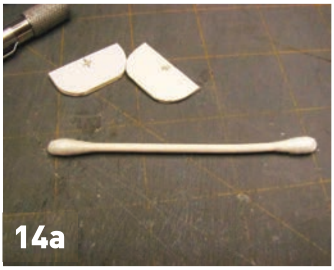
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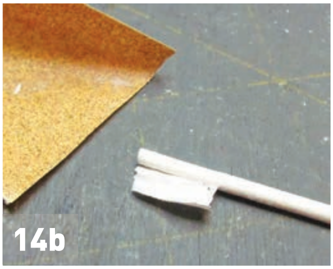
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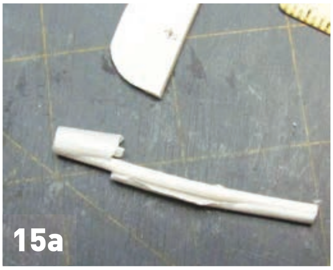
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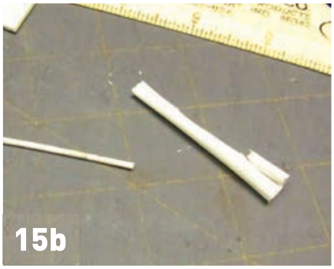
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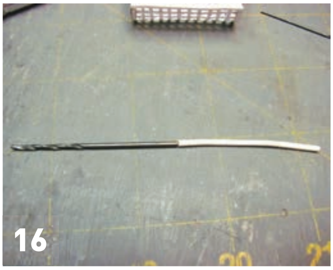
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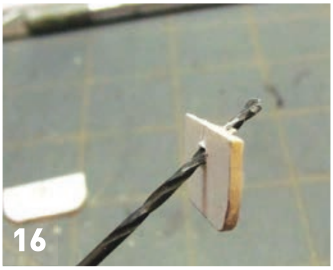
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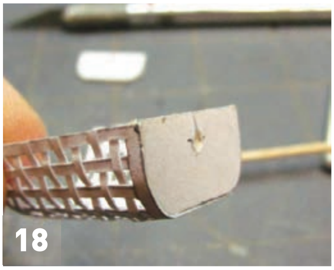
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ing up at an angle. The side of the end that you started your drill bit in is the outside of the basket.

18 Glue the long edge of the woven mat to the rounded edge of the end. Remember, the outside of the end is the side that has the lower hole. The woven mat should fit, but if it doesn't a strip is added to the top of the basket.

19 Both ends have been glued on.

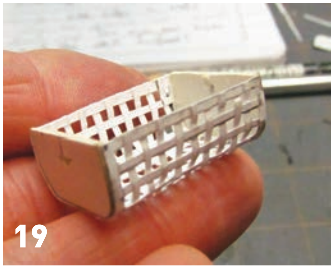
20 Cut the stick to 1-5/8'' long. Shape the stick. To make inserting the stick/handle into the hole I've sanded the tip a bit.

21 Slip one end of the handle into the hole. You will have to slide the handle through a bit to get the other side of the handle into its hole. When you are satisfied with the position, glue the handle in. You can shape the handle more after it's glued into the basket. If any of the handle is protruding you can sand or cut it off later.

22 Cut a strip of card stock to fit over the top of the frame of the woven mat covering up the ends of the weavers.

23 I painted my garden hod with Delta's Burnt Sienna, then applied a wash of black. I then sprayed a coat of clear satin finish on.

Have fun trying this out, our little people should be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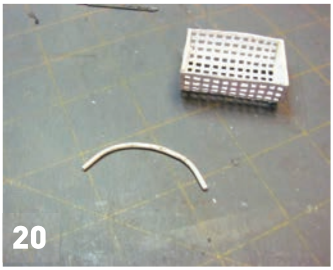
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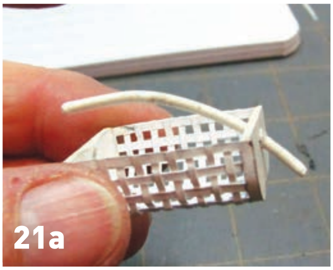
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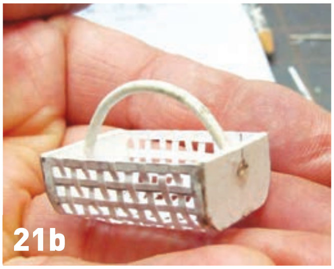
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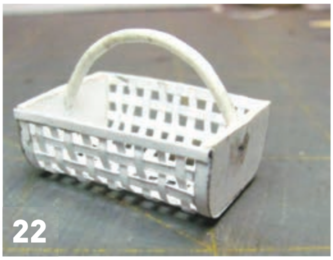
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getting out to harvest their gardens and they need a basket to hold all that wonderful produce!

Kris sells a wide selection of her 1:12 scale furniture kits through Miniatures.com.

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Do you love making miniatures and/or miniature scenes? Do you have an interesting life story connected to the art of miniatures? If so, then we want to hear from you! Send in your story (no more than 750 words, please!) and some photos to be considered for publication.

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From top to bottom: Bee Felten-Leidel, Auralea Krieger, Gosia Suchodolska

Jasmine house

Join in and build your own 1:24 dollhouse kit

BY AURALEA KRIEGER

Each month I will share tips on how to decorate and furnish your own little house. Gigi's Minis has supplied me with this wonderful Jasmine 2 Gothic Victorian 1:24 scale house kit. I will first decorate the inside then move to the outside. After that, we will make furniture and accessories. So pick yours up from her shop and join me in this fun build!

Last month we added the roof shingles. This month we will add a finial to the top of the tower roof. Do some research to see all the different designs you can make first

1 Cut the pattern out from card stock

Scale = 1:24

Materials:

- Card stock
- Scissors
- Toothpick
- Beads
- Wood glue
- Small drill
- Super Glue
- Metallic copper paint

2 Run the card stock half circle over the edge of a table to get the paper to curl up.

3 Wrap it around the top of the tower roof.

4 If needed, use small scissors to trim from the bottom of the cone.

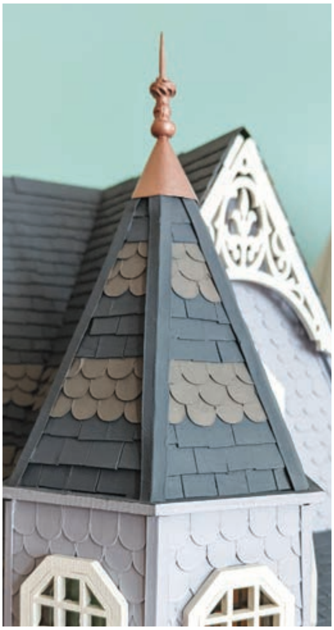
5 Wrap around and use a toothpick to put a little wood glue on the inside end. Let it get a little tacky and then wrap the other end over so it fits snuggly on the roof top. Be sure the bottom is even. Do not glue the cone to the tower yet.

6 Go through your stash of beads and find some that will fit on a toothpick.

7 Snip off the tip of the cone so the toothpick can fit through it.

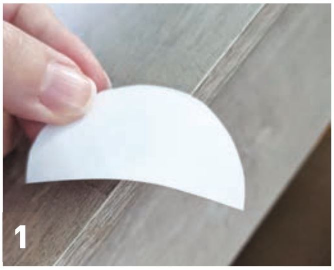
8 Drill a hole in the top of the tower if needed.

9 Dry fit the cone and push the toothpick in then put a dab of Super Glue on the top of the cone and slide on your first bead. Let it set.



10 Add more Super Glue to the toothpick and the top of the bead and slide on your next bead. Do this until all of your beads are on. Let it set.

11 Get some metallic copper paint and a spray paint your topper. I used tweezers to hold the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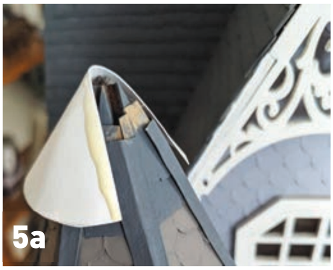
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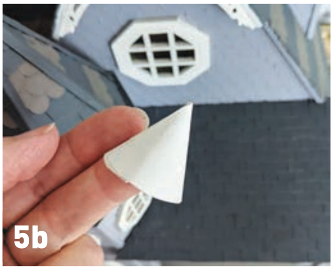
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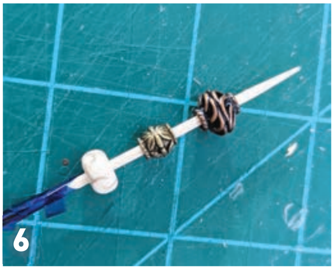
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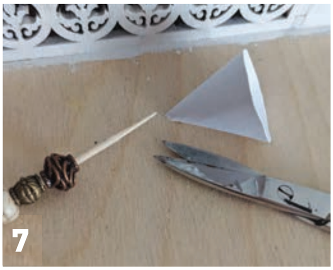
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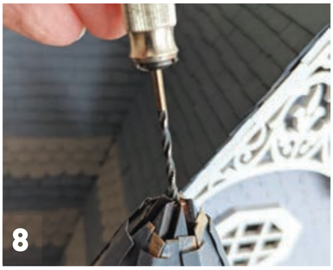
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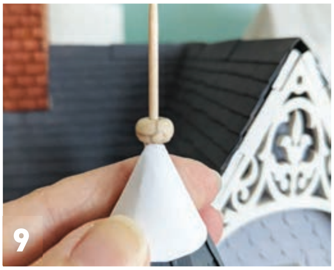
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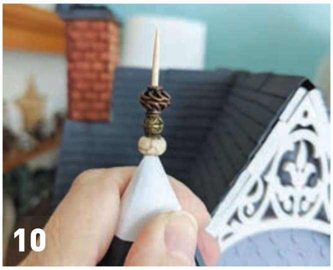
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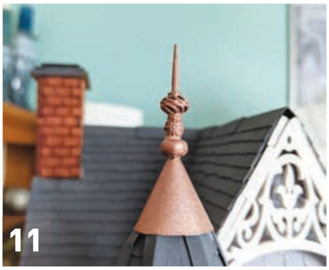
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paper while I spray painted. Once dry, I held the toothpick tip to spray paint the paper part.

12 Put some white glue in the hole you drilled and around the inside of the cone and place it on the tower so it's level. Let dry.

13 You can also add one to the front peak of the main roof if you like. There are many designs for finials so be sure to do lots of research and try different bead combinations to find special ones for your house.

In the next issue of *AM* we will be making some 1:24 furniture. I have a new blog site with lots of great content. You can follow at miniaturesbyauralea.blogspot.com.

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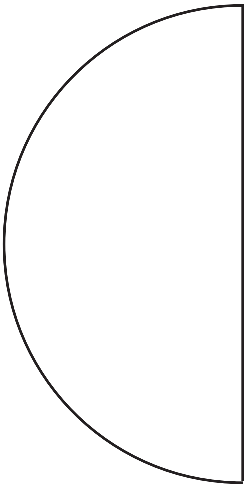

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Pumpkin garland

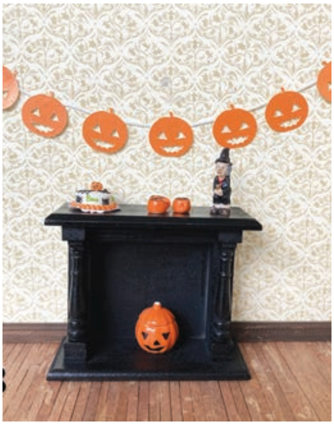
Make decorative garland using a cutting machine

BY AURORA

MEET THE MAKER:

Aurora

"I live in rural Dorset, England with my husband. My 3 children are now adults and following their own lives. I have been a miniaturist for 30 years and love that imagination knows no bounds with creativity."



This tutorial will show you how to make some pumpkin garland in 1:12 scale using a Cricut maker and Cricut Design space. For other scales you just need to adjust the measurements. I've no experience of using other cutting machines or software, but I'm sure that this could be made on others.

1 Make sure your setting, (top left corner) is set to 'imperial' for measurement. Open up a new project page. On the left-hand-side click on 'images' and in the search box type 'pumpkins'. This will bring up hundreds of different designs. Choose a solid one that will hang in one piece. Otherwise you will have several pieces which won't hang.

2 Some images are free, others cost a small amount, but once paid for you can reuse as much as you like. Click on the image you like then click on 'insert image' at the bottom right corner of the screen.

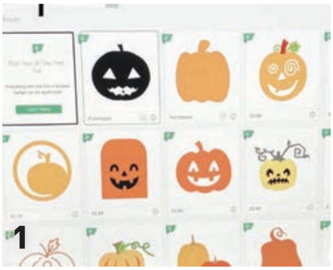
Scale = Any

Materials:

- Cricut maker
- Cricut Design Space™
- Orange card stock
- Tweezers
- Twine or thread
- Tacky Glue

3 You now have to size it to 1:12 scale. In the middle of the top tool bar there are height and width boxes. Click on 'padlock' to open it and insert '1' in width box. Close the padlock. Open padlock and insert '1' in the height box and close padlock. The pumpkin will now be 1 inch square, which is the correct size for 1:12 scale.

4 On the top right you will see 'duplicate', click on it as many times as you like for the amount of pumpkins you want. I made 10 of them. You will then see on your project page an image. Don't worry that they overlap, as when you click on 'make it', after you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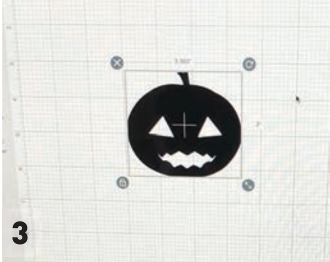
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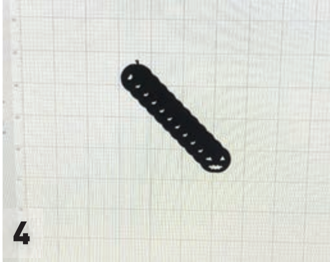
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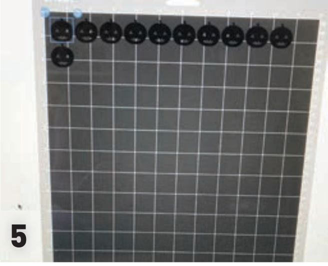
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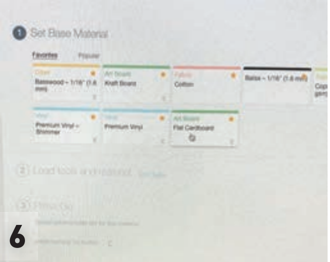
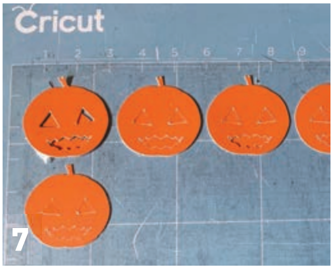

Set Base Material
Favorites
Popular
Basswood – 1/16" (1.6 mm)
Kraft Board
Cotton
Balsa – 1/16" (1.6 mm)
Premium Vinyl – Shimmer
Premium Vinyl
Flat Cardboard
Load tools and material
Press Go
6



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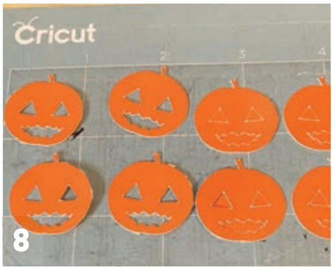

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click on 'save project', the maker will automatically put them in order ready for cutting out.

5 Click on 'make it' in the top right corner. This is where it will ask you to pay if you are not using a free image. Once paid for, click 'continue'. Here you will be asked what material you are using. As you can see from fig 5, I have saved my most used materials for ease; there is a large amount of categories to choose from. I used lightweight orange card stock and clicked on 'flat cardboard'.

6 Once chosen it will tell you what blade you need to use. For card stock it is the 'fine point blade'. You will be prompted to load the cardboard on a sticky mat; I used the blue mat. Once loaded, press 'go' and the maker will begin to cut out the pumpkins.

7 Once it's finished, unload the mat and carefully take off the cardboard. The pumpkins should be left on the mat. As you can see my mat is well used!

8 You then need to 'weed', which means taking out the bits of eyes and mouth which will be cut by the maker. I used fine pointed tweezers for this. You are then left with the pumpkin cut-outs as you see in the step 8 photo.

9 Once weeded, cut your piece of string to the length you require and glue the top of pumpkins to it. I like odd numbers so I have used 7 pumpkins. Attach to the wall with a piece of wax at each end.

See more of my work at www.paganmoon miniatures.com.

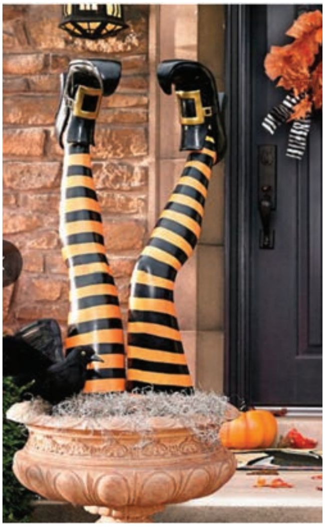
THE mini SCOOP

AM's news page is devoted to keeping busy miniaturists up to speed. Please submit items of mini interest to auralea@ashdown.co.uk or to *American Miniaturist* - Mini Scoop, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944.

Mini Make It Challenge

We challenge you to take your best shot at duplicating this urn with witch legs by Hosehotool into a miniature version. We can't wait to see what you can achieve. Email your finished photo to auralea@ashdown.co.uk and we'll print it in MiniMail!

This could be a fun club project or add some details to your existing projects!



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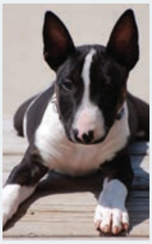


WHERE'S ARTHUR CONTEST

Arthur was found on page 20 peeking out the window of the Jasmine house in the **AM219** issue. We have randomly selected **Vivie** from **Kearney, MO** to be our winner for this month's Where's Arthur contest. We will be sending her a food mold by Julia Henry for helping us find Arthur. But as you know Arthur loves to roam through each page and, as expected, he has once again wandered off while we weren't looking. Hopefully you can help us find him.

Julia Henry from Whysper Fairy Etsy: www.etsy.com/shop/whysperfairy

221 Highlights contest

We would love to know what your favorite highlights were in this issue of *AM*. You could win this 1:24 dresser KIT by Red Cottage Miniatures. You have to enter to win! All it takes is a written paragraph for this random drawing! Be sure to follow the contest directions on the right side of this page.

RedCottageMiniatures
Etsy: RedCottageMiniatures

Market stall giveaway from Karen's Dollhouse Shop

Enter to win this 1:12 scale market stall with a selection of fruit, vegetables and even a caged chicken! Simply follow the contest directions on the right side of this page for this contest. One lucky winner will be chosen for this drawing this issue. It could be you!

Karen's Dollhouse Shop/Karen & Andrew Aird
Web: www.ReutterPorcelainUSA.com Web: www.KarensDollhouse.com

Contest directions

To be eligible for the listed contests/giveaways please indicate the **name of the contest/giveaway** and **AM issue number** and send your entry to ***American Miniaturist*, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944, or email them to auralea@ashdown.co.uk.** Please be sure to include your name, address, phone number, and email address. The deadline for this issue's entry is **Monday, November 15, 2021**. Good luck!

Recent winners

***AM*219 Highlights**
Joyce from Kettering, OH

Market stall giveaway
Sharon from Waukesha, WI
Congratulations!

Siding giveaway
Lynn from Salinas, CA

Healing stones

Add some healing stones to your witches collection

BY AURALEA KRIEGER

MEET THE MAKER:

Auralea Krieger

"I live in Maryland and work remotely for this wonderful magazine. I have been an artist my entire life and a miniaturist for 30+ years. I love this particular art form because of the challenges, and the imagination has no limits!"

This is a basic display box for miniature crystals and stones. You can expand on this tutorial and make a longer box with more compartments of different sizes or make a few boxes that can stack on top of each other.

Materials:

- Basswood
- Knife
- Wood glue
- Ruler
- Acrylic paint - blue and brown
- Paint brush
- Small stones
- White glue

1 With a knife, cut a piece of 1/16'' thick basswood to 1'' x 3/4''.

2 Cut 2 sides that are the same length as the base, to 3/16'' tall.

3 Glue the sides on with a square or brace to keep them straight.

4 Measure the ends and cut 2 more pieces for the ends and glue them on. Let them dry.

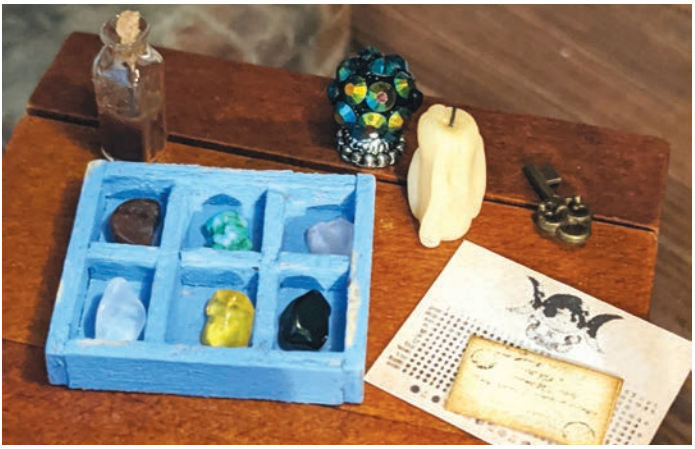
5 Glue in 2 pieces across the width.

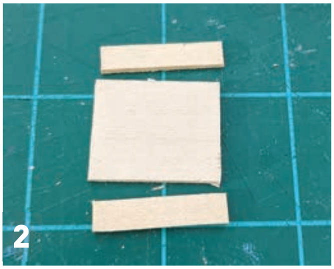
6 Then line up a strip of wood and mark where the smaller cross pieces will go.

7 Glue them all in and let them dry then sand them smooth.

8 If there are holes or notches fill them in with wood glue. Let dry.

9 Paint the entire thing with acrylic paint and let it dry.

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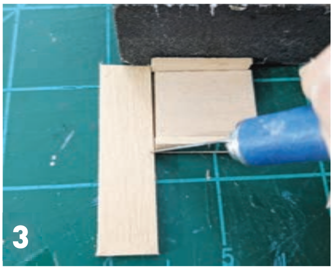
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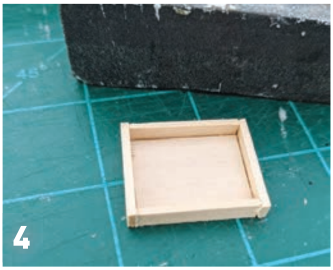
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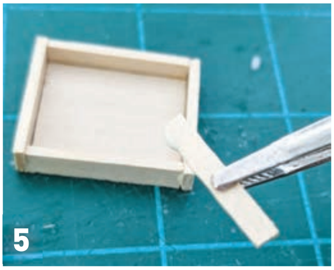
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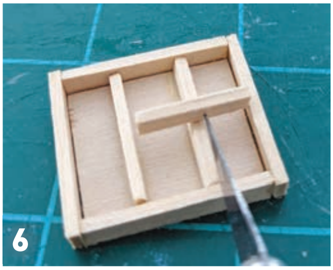
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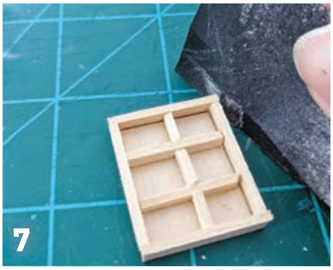
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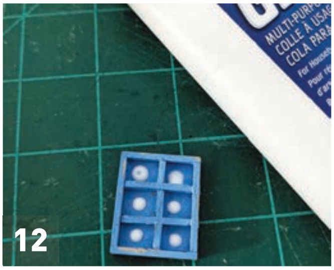
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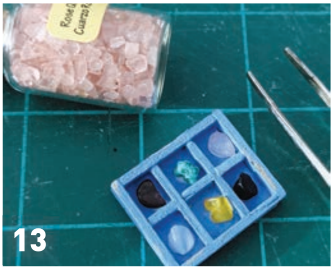
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10 Sand smooth with very fine sandpaper. To make it look aged you could sand away some of the paint, exposing the wood. Do this very gently.

11 Mix some brown paint and water and quickly brush over it to give it an aged look.

12 Put small spots of white glue in each compartment. Use a toothpick to keep the spots very small. They will squish out when you place the rocks on them.

13 Use tweezers to lay in your stones. Let dry.

14 Make more or display the finished tray in your miniature scene. You could also make a seaside theme box with tiny shells.

Be sure to follow my new blog at https://miniaturesbyauralea.blogspot.com to keep up with my latest miniature projects.

TOPTIP:

I found the tiny stones in small bottles as a set at the craft store in the jewelry isle. You could also just go outside and look closely at the pebbles in your area and keep as is or paint them.

Creating tales from the past

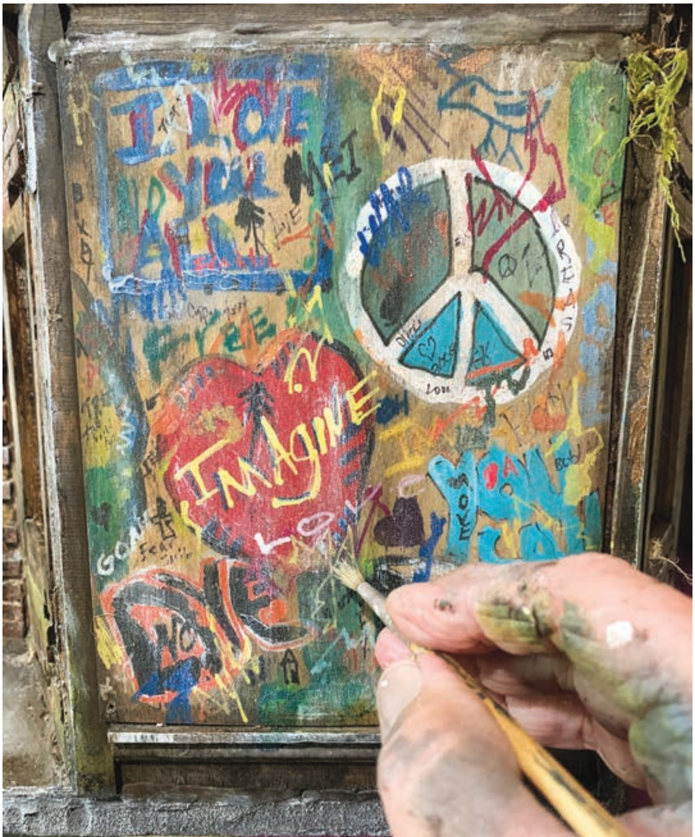
Juli Steel's fan base cry "dark but beautiful!" as they enjoy every moment of her soulful art

BY DEB WEISSLER

Taking the base frame from an abandoned dollhouse, discarding parts of the top, adding some windows and pieces of miscellaneous wood and Juli Steel has constructed another weird but strangely beautiful abandoned building. This talented artist has an abiding affinity for vintage, damaged, and abandoned buildings being slowly reclaimed by nature.

The same can be said for the parts she discovers in flea markets, antique shops, and junkyards. Things she can salvage and reassemble into miniature vignettes that can raise the hair on the backs of some people's necks. Juli's pieces give customers pause, and "now that's different" is an oft repeated phrase. Her studio is filled with a collection of inspirational oddities, there is no wall space and shelves are filled with supplies and a collection of bird cages full of dolls. People stand in awe and just walk in circles. It's the odd bits and bobs that inspire her.

As a child growing up in the Pacific Northwest and the youngest of five children, there was little money for store bought toys. So Juli made her own, sewed Barbie clothes and built little wooden boats to float in the mud puddles. Her family were

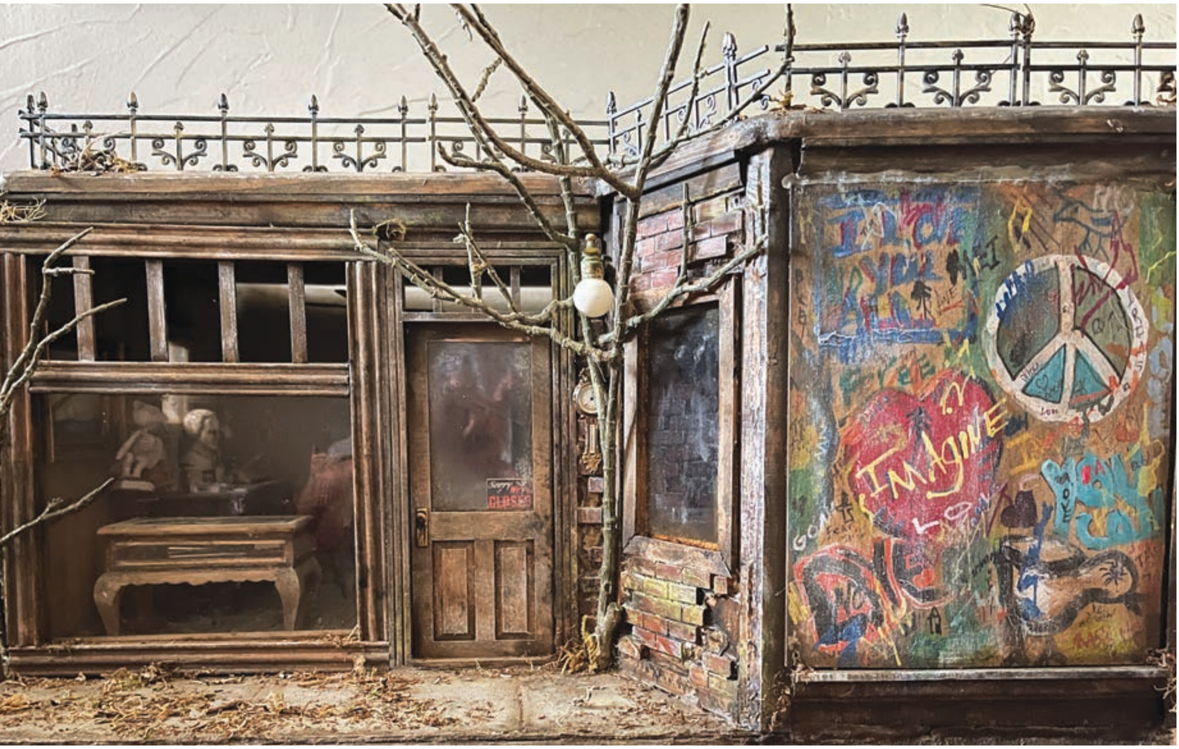


Right: Exterior hand painting.

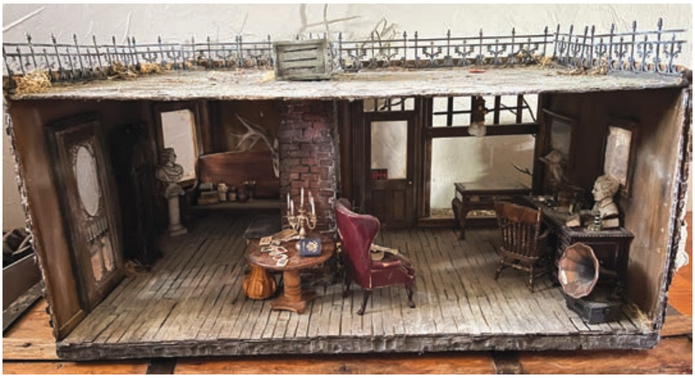
loggers, so summers were spent camping and exploring the deep woods. An introduction to miniatures came from a home economics class project where she had to build a house and furnish it with whatever she could get her hands on. It was an A+ moment in every aspect!

A budding artist, Juli eventually opened an Etsy shop as a way to market her art. She had been making art for years just to give friends and she wanted to try her utmost to sell enough to pay for materials to create more. Sales went well and her business grew quickly. One day she walked into a Goodwill store and there sat 6 dollhouses filled with furniture. "It was buy all or nothing," Juli recalls. "My husband seriously thought I was crazy to buy up all those miniatures. I told him I could make money and fulfill my dream of wanting a dollhouse." With her quirky and ghoulish style already well established, she wasn't about to make something sweet and girly, so she took her love for abandoned buildings and went from there.

Her *Tales of the Past* vignette began as a partially built dollhouse put together with hot glue. So she tore it apart and began reassembling



Above: The front of the structure is distressed to perfection. **Right:** A look inside the full interior of the room box.



it. "I love old worn storefronts and abandoned buildings. I feel tied to the past, especially the era from around the 1880s through the early 1900s. I love to imagine the past history in an old house. Abandoned buildings fill me with questions about the past lives of its owners and what took place that caused it to be abandoned."

Her building is reminiscent of an early twentieth century general store, merchandise stocked below and the proprietor's home above. The building may be vintage but the graffiti wall followed years later. This was the most challenging and enjoyable part of the project. "I used different paints and brushes to create a variety of thoughts. Peace is what I want and sometimes it's hard to come by. There are tidbits of information about the world and my feelings buried in there. Graffiti isn't easy so I just started painting and writing. I intentionally wrote words over other words,

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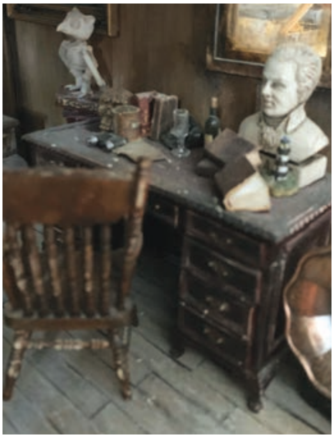

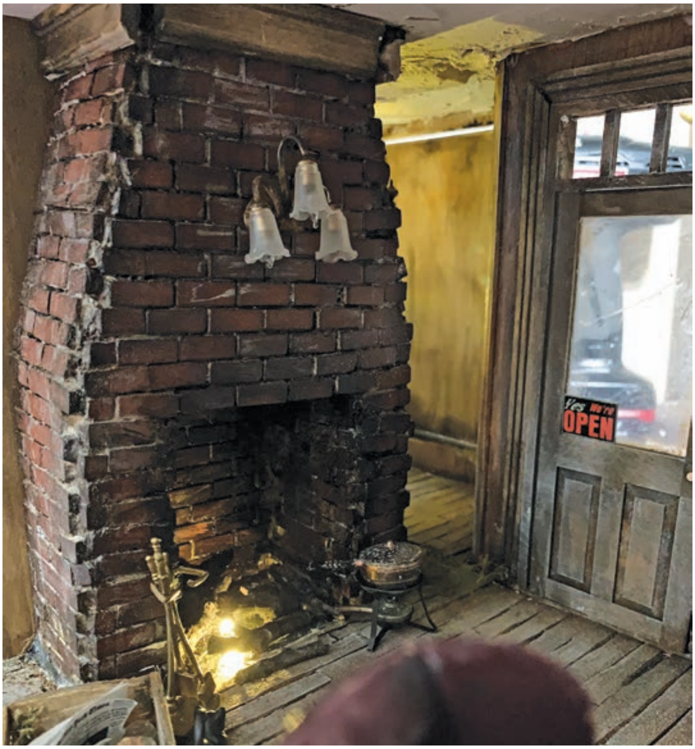

which is normal on a graffiti wall. Graffiti represents new and old and events long forgotten, just how I wanted the building to be."

As you tread softly through the dust and discards of the building's past, your footprints stir up memories of voices echoing down through the ages. The sign on the door may say 'sorry we're closed' but the rooms you wander through speak of past lives that once called this place home. Juli once again skillfully weaves a montage of abandonment. Boarded up and broken windows, worn floor boards, peeling wallpaper, fallen plaster, dust, and moldering remnants of life left behind.

The final results of each and every piece Juli creates come as a complete surprise, as she has no plans other than the visions in her head. "It is wonderful to see a physical piece arise from a thought in my mind. Its challenging, inspiring and feeds my soul to see a completed piece. Art is a funny thing, it can easily control me and my time."

For Juli, miniatures are a world of magic. "When peeking inside a dollhouse you become that little girl who long ago spent hours decorating her tiny home. I put a lot of my emotions into my creations as it is a wonderful way to reach out to others and possibly have a positive impact on their lives. There are times my art helps me release stress when a subject weighs heavy on my mind. My customers connect emotionally to my art too.

I do have my creepy doll days too. Just fun weird art that for the most part has no

deep thoughts put into it. I'm currently working on a large dollhouse called *Twistedcopperforest Manor*. It's an abandoned house invaded by magical forest creatures. One room will have a swamp of goblin huts."

A retired child care provider, Juli now has the luxury of working full time at her art. Balancing miniatures with her other art can be challenging as she wants to do both full time. When she's not in her workshop, her quiet life consists of a cup of coffee, backyard bird watching, and the feel of ocean waves lapping her feet. It's a far cry from her dark and brooding miniatures but this too feeds her soul.

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Fall fantasy tree

Make a tree come to life for your Halloween scene

BY LORI DEBACKER

MEET THE MAKER:

Lori DeBacker

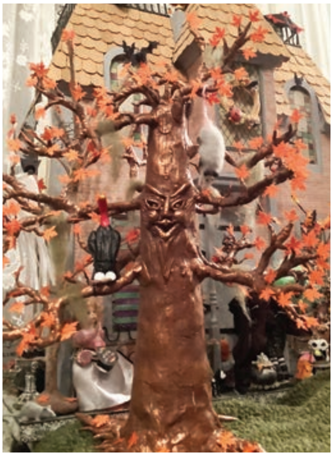
Lori is a retired English and history educator and proud mother of two adult sons. She resides with her husband, two pug dogs, and 72 dollhouses of various scales in a restored Victorian home in Adrian, Michigan. Fifteen years ago, she joined a Toledo, Ohio miniature club whose members encouragement led her to create and sell OOAK miniatures.

This miniature tree is a perfect addition to any haunted dollhouse lawn or fantasy scene. It is an intermediate skill level project taking two days to complete. The Crayola Model Magic clay is paramount to the success of the project due to its elasticity. The clay product is easily found online and ships worldwide.

Scale = 1:12

Materials:

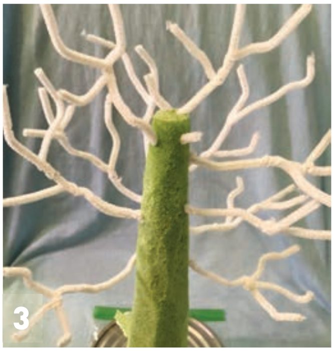
- 1 medium floral foam cone
- Thick tacky water-based craft adhesive or glue
- 12 chenille pipe cleaners
- Two 4oz packages of Crayola Model Magic clay - preferably brown
- Miniature leaves in fall colors
- Sharp kitchen knife
- Tweezers
- Dental scaler
- Large tin can lid
- Sandwich bag
- Brown acrylic craft paint
- Metallic copper acrylic craft paint
- 1/4" round paint brush
- 1" fan paint brush



1 Take a kitchen knife and narrow the foam cone, slicing off pieces vertically down towards the bottom, angling slightly to make a more trunk-like shape. Make a temporary base by wrapping the tin can lid in a sandwich bag; this will allow the tree to be removed safely when complete.

2 Glue the trunk to the base. Use some smaller bits of the sliced off material to form tree roots and adhere to the trunk.

3 Insert pipe cleaners at approximately a 30 degree downward angle randomly into the trunk foam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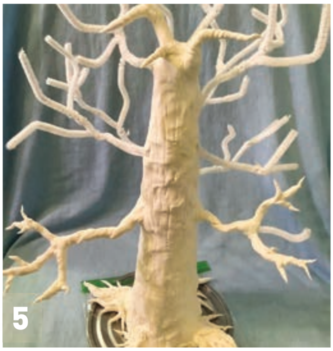
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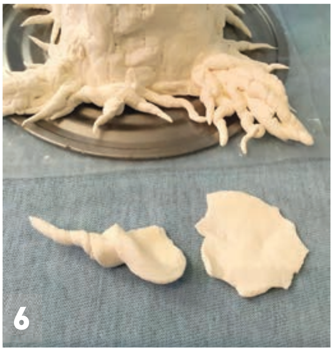
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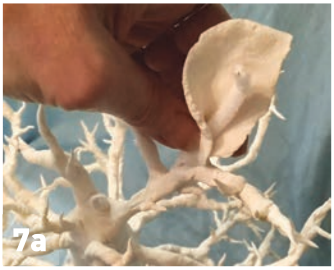
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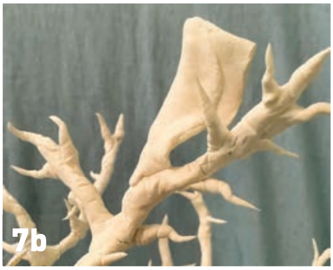
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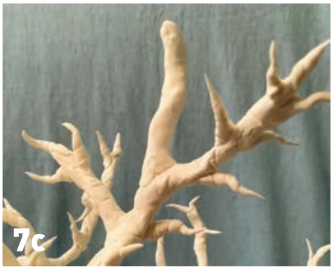
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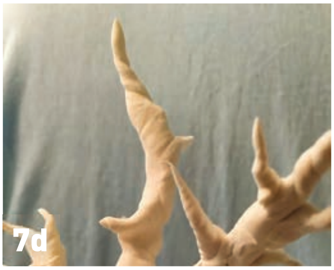
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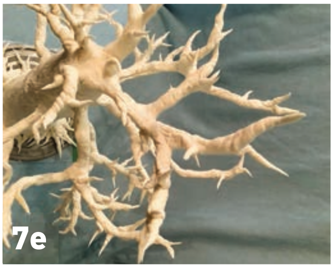
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to form the branches. Cut pipe cleaners into shorter lengths and twist onto the main branches to create forking limb structures.

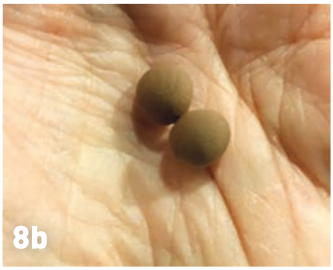
4 Cover the foam trunk in adhesive working up the tree first, then cover the foam roots at the bottom.

5 Using flattened pieces of clay, cover the base of the trunk and, again, work upwards.

6 When the trunk is encased, lay flattened pieces over the root structure, pressing it firmly into the floral foam. Secure the roots by smoothing the root clay into the covered trunk. Finer roots are best created by twisting the ends to points of worm-like pieces of rolled clay.

Overlay these upon the main root structures and complete the look by using the scaler to make bark-like impressions. At this point it is a good idea to take the scaler and knife and make a combination of long and short vertical impressions in the trunk as well.

7 Once the trunk is finished, begin wrapping the pipe cleaner branches with flattened clay pieces. End each 'branch' by twisting the clay to a point. It will be necessary to place small pieces of twisted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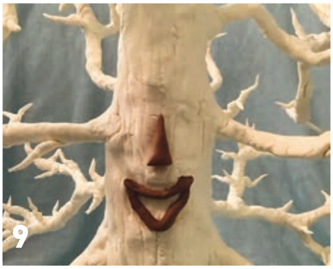
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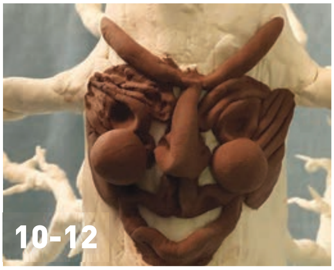
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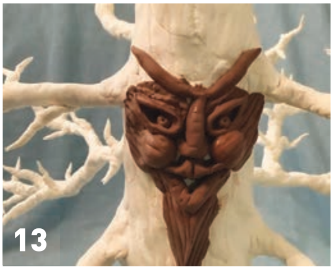
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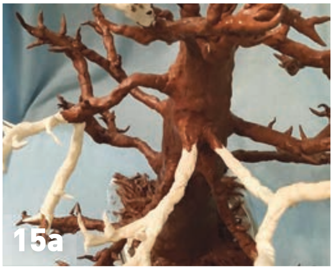
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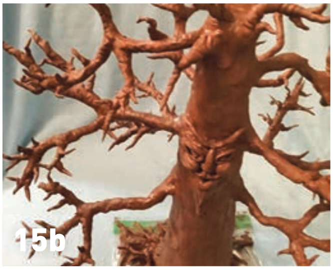
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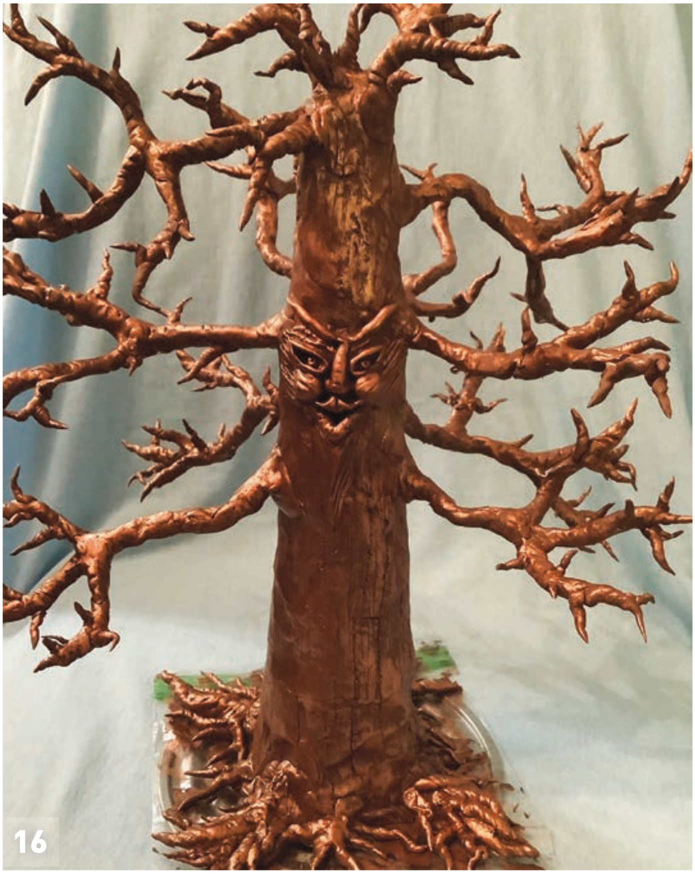

16

clay points upon each main branch to create addition small limbs. Remember to orient the small limbs in different directions so they appear natural.

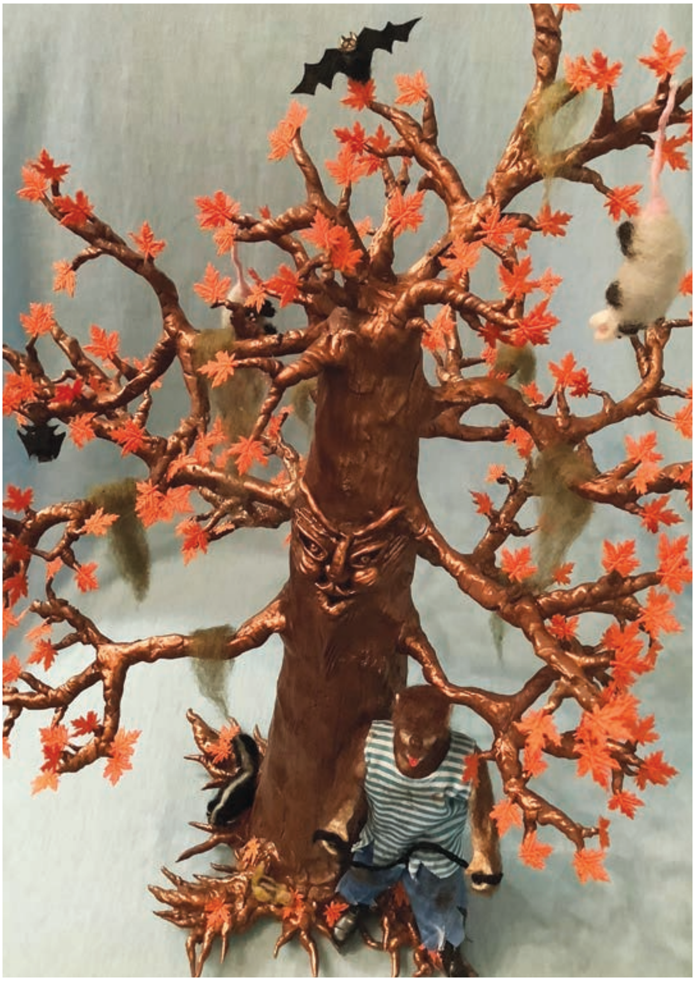
8 After completing the basic tree, roll several clay worms in sizes from 1/8'' diameter to a 1/4''. Roll three pairs of clay balls in approximate sizes of 1/8'', 1/4'' and 3/8'' in diameter. For teaching purposes, brown clay was used to bring out the detail in demonstrating the facial features. Normally, I would use the same color clay for the entire project.

9 Begin sculpting the face, rub a little water over the area where the

face will be added on the trunk to improve adhesion. For the mouth, begin with a 1/8'' worm and position it in a kidney shape. Next, take a 1/4'' worm and cut it 1'' long. Pinch it to a point to form the bridge of the nose. Then slightly flatten the other end and pinch to form nostril flares.

10 Next, form eyes and brow using more clay pieces. For the eye sockets, take a 3'' length of 1/8'' in diameter clay worm, divide it in half, and form it into two teardrop shapes. Dampen the area where the eyes will be placed and position the sockets with their points facing outward at 60 degrees from the horizontal.

11 Next, take two 1/8'' diameter balls and position in the socket for the iris, use the tip of the scaler to create a depression in each eyeball for the pupil. Place these at the bottom of each teardrop socket. Take a 1/4'' clay worm and cut two 1''pieces to form eyebrows. Place the eyebrows at a 30 to 45 degree angle above each eye socket, pinching the upward ends to a point. Take the 1/4'' diameter clay worm and cut two 3/8'' long pieces. Flatten each and press under each eye, then using a knife or scaler, form 'bags' by pressing radiating lines.



12 To create rounded cheeks, take the 3/8'' diameter balls and firmly press into the area below the eye bags on either side of the nose.

13 To add the beard, take a pinch of clay and form into an elongated triangle. Place it below the mouth, pinching it more narrowly as it descends.

14 At this point, blending the facial features into the trunk and adding bark texture to the facial components. Allow the tree to cure overnight.

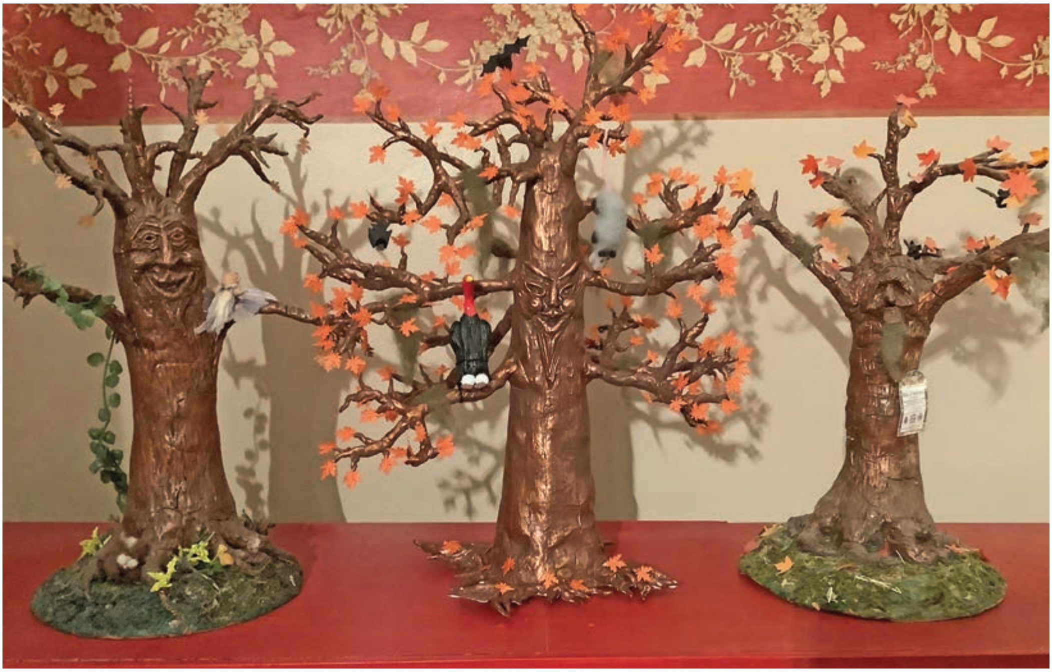
15 Even if brown clay was used, I believe this next step is necessary to seal the water based clay, improving its longevity. This also helps prevent fading of the clay from direct sunlight. Paint the tree starting from the roots working upward, using brown acrylic craft paint and a 1/4'' brush. Work the paint completely into the textured surface, ensuring full coverage of the dried clay. To ease the process of painting the limbs, I recommend holding them by the tips and applying paint from the trunk proceeding outwardly. Allow an hour or two for the paint to setup.

16 To bring out the bark texture, dry brush some metallic copper colored acrylic craft paint over the entire tree. It's recommend to use a fan brush for this treatment. Allow another hour or two for the paint to cure.

17 Using Tacky Glue or other viscous adhesive, attach one leaf or more to each of the branch tips. Attach the first leaf oriented along the axis of the branch, attach subsequent leaves angling out to either side. Remember to attach a few fallen leaves to the base for added realism.

18 The basic tree is complete at this point. However, if further embellishment is desired, adding bats, woodland creatures, or even a themed doll at the base can enhance the presentation.

Also, if one wants to create the effect of Spanish moss, twist small hunks of avocado colored wool roving into 'beards' and apply at random. Personally, I have made several trees that I use to display various felted creatures that I have made from wool roving to enhance my haunted dollhouses.



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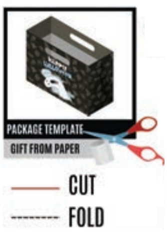
Trick-or-treat bags, potion labels, masks, spooky Halloween decor.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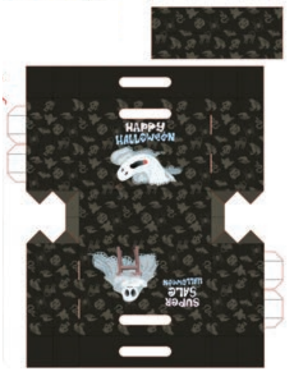
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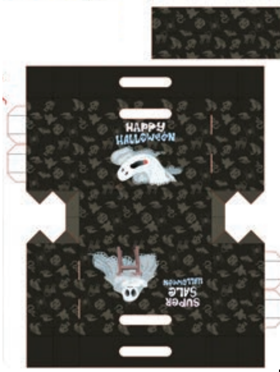
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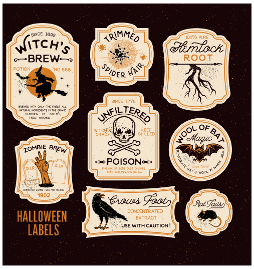
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WOOL OF BAT Magic
Crows Foot CONCENTRATED EXTRACT USE WITH CAUTION!
Rat Tails
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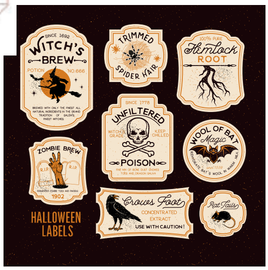
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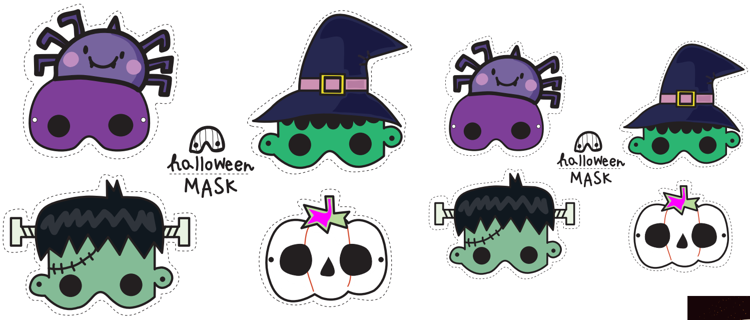
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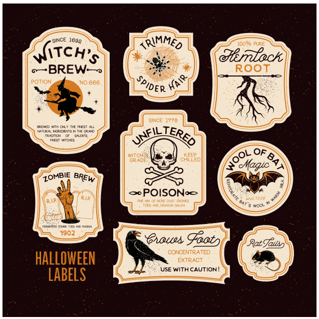
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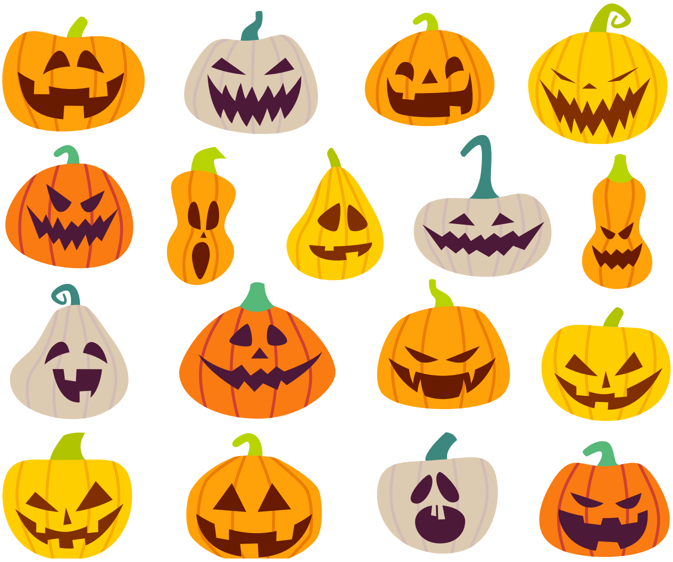

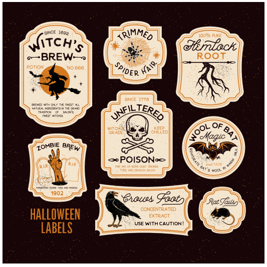
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UPCOMING SHOWS, AUCTIONS & EXHIBITS

Due to the current pandemic, please be sure to double check with the show provider's website and social media pages for the latest up to date information.

APRIL 6 - DECEMBER 31

MAYSVILLE, KY

Scaled to Perfection: Encore! April 6 to Dec. 31, 2021 Maysville, KY. KSB Miniatures Collection at KYGMC. Back by popular demand, the KSB Miniatures Collection is pleased to announce a repeat presentation of its widely acclaimed 2018-2019 exhibition of new miniatures, Scaled to Perfection. Catherine Palace on temporary display Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, 2021. Details at www.ksbminiaturescollection.com

NOVEMBER 5 - 7

CHERRY HILL, NJ

Philadelphia Miniaturia 2021 will be held at the Crowne Plaza Philadelphia/Cherry Hill located at 2349 W. Marlton Pike, Cherry Hill, NJ 08002. To be admitted on Friday Preview, November 5, 2021, you must purchase a Preview Ticket for $25. (covers full weekend admission). Preview hours are Friday, 6pm - 9pm and Saturday, 9am - 10am. You may purchase from dealers during Preview hours! Workshops listed on our website. For Daily Show General Admission - pay at the door Saturday, November 6, 2021 the show runs from 10am to 5pm and Sunday, November 7, 2021 10am to 3pm. $10 Adults per day and $4 Children under 10 years old per day. Lunch will be available for purchase each day.

NOV 12 - 13

CHICAGO, IL

Chicago Autumn Showcase of Miniatures will be held at the Holiday Inn at 1000 Busse Rd, Elk Grove, IL. Show will be on Friday from 4-8 pm, Saturday 9 am - 3 pm. Classes on Friday. For more information, please visit www.miniatureshows.com or contact tdminiatures@gmail.com or call 314-277-2601.

JANUARY 29-30, 2022

CULVER CITY, CA

35th Annual Miniatures West Show and Sale has a new date! January 29-30, 2022 * Culver City, CA Show and Sale, Courtyard by Marriott, 6333 Bristol Pkwy, Culver City, CA, 90230, Saturday 9:30am-4:30pm. Admission: $7 adults, $3 children 6-12. No strollers. Free exhibits. Info: Nancy Branch, 310-454-2054, wbranch@earthlink.net. Workshops by pre-registration on Sunday. Info: Rosa Rothering, 310-467-5590. Website for more details: miniatureswest.com

FEBRUARY 5 & 6

SAN DIEGO, CA

47th Annual Miniatures Show & Sale will be held on on Saturday, Feb 5th from 10am - 5 pm and on Sunday, Feb 6th from 11am - 4pm. The show will be held at the San Diego Marriott Del Mar, 11966 El Camino Real, San Diego, CA 92130. Exhibits, Sales & Workshops. Adults $10 Children (8-12) $5. FREE Sunday with paid Saturday. For more information visit www.sd-miniatureshow.com Facebook sdminiatureshow or Instagram @sandiego.minishow Email: sd.minishow@gmail.com

To have your show or special event listed on these pages, please contact Kelly at:
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